

THE
HEIRESSES.

A
COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

J. BURGoyNE.

Spectatores, ad pudicos mores facta haec fabula est;

Qui pudicitiae esse vultis praemium, plausum date.

PLAUTUS.

BERLIN.

PRINTED FOR J. F. UNGER, 1790.

THE

H. E. I. R. E. S.

A

C. O. M. E. D. Y.

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

J. BURTON.

Specimens, and figures of the fossils of the

Geological Survey of the British Isles, 1841.

PLATE.

PLATE

PRINTED FOR J. T. UNDER, 1841.

TO THE
EARL OF DERBY.

MY DEAR LORD,

OUR connection and friendship, as well as the partiality I know you will entertain in favour of any attempt at regulated Drama, mark you as the person, to whom, with the most propriety, and inclination, I can inscribe the Comedy of the Heirefs.

It also comes to your Lordship's hand with a secondary claim to your acceptance, as owing its existence to the leisure and tranquillity I enjoyed during the two last summers at Knowsley.

I long intended, as your Lordship can witness, to keep the name of the author concealed. After the success with which the Play has been honoured, I must expect that the change of my design will be imputed by many to vanity: I shall submit, without murmuring, to that belief, if I may obtain equal credit for the sincerity of another pride which this discovery gratifies — that, of testifying, in the most public manner, the respect, and affection with which I have the honour to be,

My dear Lord,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

J. BURGOYNE.

P R E F A C E.

THE approbation the following Comedy has received upon the Stage and the candour with which every criticism, that has come to the Author's knowledge, has been accompanied, might encourage him to trust it to the closet without any other preface, than an acknowledgement of his gratitude to the Public, for the honours done to him. And if he detains the reader a few moments more, it is not to disavow what has been hinted at in some of the dayly prints, as a species of plagiarism, but to plead it in behalf of dramatic writing in general, against rules, that if carried to the

extent they lead to, would fix shackles upon genius, and give a very undue limitation to variety.

In point of fable for instance — Is it a reproach to borrow?

Surely the dramatist, like the architect, brings his talents equally to the test, whether he builds upon another man's ground or his own. And if instead of small and detached parts, the writer of the Heiress had taken the compleat plot of his play from a novel; he would have imitated the examples (the only imitation to which he has any pretence) of the best dramatic Poets of every age.

In point of originality of characters — It is humbly hoped this Comedy is not without it. But present instances apart, it is submitted to the judicious, whether such an exaction of novelty as would make a resemblance to any thing ever seen upon the stage before unacceptable, might not ma-

terially vitiate the public taste, carry the major part of writers beyond the scope of nature and probability, and deprive the spectator of that pleasing and infinite diversity of shape and colouring that the leading passions, vices, and follies of civilized life, admit. Love, avarice, misanthropy, &c. &c. if drawn a thousand and a thousand times with new shades, and in different points of view, will do as much credit to invention, and have as just an effect in exhibition, as if Moliere or Congreve had never touched the subjects. It is not whether there may not be personages in the *Heirefs*, in whom we may discover family features, that is asked, but whether they are not still individuals, with whom we have been hitherto unacquainted — a question, not for the Author to determine.

Original thought — It has been observed that there is an image in a speech of Lord Gayville, copied closely from Rouf-

seau. Very possibly it may be so. The Author of the Heirefs certainly has read that elegant writer; and to shew how easily invention may be deceived, he will quote another writer (in his estimation still more elegant) who thus accounts, and apologizes for, unconscious plagiarism — „Faded ideas,” says Mr. Sheridan, „Float in „the fancy like half forgotten dreams; and „imagination, in its fullest enjoyments, „becomes suspicious of its offspring, and „doubts whether it has created or adopted.”

More sentiments and expression due to the imagination of others, may possibly be challenged, though they are equally out of the recollection of the Author. — He would only wish the candid to admit the probability, that while he belived them his own, he thought them his best.

Many of the scenes now submitted to perusal, have been shortened in representation, and a few words have been altered

occasionally to preserve connection — a circumstance necessary to be known, lest the performers should be suspected of negligence, when, on the contrary, too much cannot be said of their attention and zeal. When all have been eminent, it would be unnecessary, if not invidious, to particularize any: There is nevertheless a Lady, to whom, by her standing separately and individually in one part of the performance, the Author, without departing from his maxim, may express his more than ordinary obligation. Miss Farren, by her inimitable manner of delivering the Epilogue, has made a better apology to the public than any his pen could have produced, for a composition which, from an accident, was much too hastily written in some parts, and in others pieced together with a like insufficiency of time.

The Epilogue excepted, no defects in the following sheets can be covered by the

excuse of hurry: They cannot be so, consistently with truth, nor indeed, with inclination: For the Author had rather be thought incapable of pleasing, after his greatest cares, than wanting in the attention and respect which every man who ventures to publish a production of this nature owes to the world and to himself — Not to let it pass from his hands without frequent revisal, and the best considered finish his abilities can give.

IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Sir Clement Flint,	—	Mr. KING.
Clifford,	— —	Mr. SMITH.
Lord Gayville,	—	Mr. PALMER.
Alscip,	— —	Mr. PARSONS.
Chignon,	— —	Mr. BADDELEY.
Mr. Blandish,	—	Mr. BANNISTER, jun.
Prompt,	— —	Mr. R. PALMER.
Mr. Rightly,	—	Mr. AICKIN.

Chairman, Servants, &c.

W O M E N.

Lady Emily,	—	Miss FARREN.
Miss Alscip,	— —	Miss POPE.
Miss Alton,	— —	Mrs. CROUCH.
Mrs. Sagely,	— —	Mrs. BOOTH.
Tiffany,	— —	Miss TIDSWELL.
Mrs. Blandish,	—	Mrs. WILSON.

THE HEIRESS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Lady's Apartment.*

Mr. Blandish and Mrs. Letitia Blandish discovered writing: letters folded up, and message-cards scattered upon the table.

MRS. BLANDISH.

Leans upon her elbows as meditating; writes as pleased with her thought; lays down the pen.

THERE it is, compleat — (*reads conceitedly*)
"Adieu, my charming friend, my amiable,
my all

Accomplished sociate! conceive the ardor of:
Your lovers united with your own sensibility —
Still will the compound be but faintly expressive
Of the truth and tenderness of your

"LETITIA BLANDISH."

There's phrase — There's a period — Match it if
you can.

BLANDISH. Not I indeed: I am working upon a quite different plan: but you are as welcome to my cast off style, as you shou'd be to my old embroidery. Pick out the gold if it be of any use.

MRS. BLANDISH. Cast off style! Excellent assurance! And pray, Sir, to whom are you indebted for the very elements of wheedling, and all that has attended it's progress, from the plaything in your nursery, to the brilliant upon your finger?

BLANDISH. For the elements, my honour'd sister, and partner, I confess the obligation; but for the proficiency, I have attain'd the sublime of the science, while you with more experience are still a novice; like a Miss at her fluttering harpsichord, with a nimble finger, but no ear: You keep in tune, 'tis true, for that is the merit of the instrument, but you are continually out of time, and always thrumming the same key.

MRS. BLANDISH. Which in plain English is as much as to say —

BLANDISH. That human vanity is an instrument of such ease and compass, the most unskilful can play something upon it: but to touch it to the true purpose —

MRS. BLANDISH. Well, Sir, and look round you pray; these apartments were not furnished from the interest of two miserable thousand pounds in the three per cents. any more than our table and equipage have been maintained by *your* patrimony — A land estate of three hundred a year, out of repair, and mortga-

ged for nearly its value. I believe I have stated our original family circumstances pretty accurately.

BLANDISH. They wanted improvement, it must be acknowledg'd. But before we bring our industry to a comparison, in the name of the old father of flattery, to whom is that perfect phrase address'd?

MRS. BLANDISH. To one worth the pains, I can tell you. — Miss Alscip.

BLANDISH. What, sensibility to Miss Alscip! My dear sister, this is too much, even in your own way: had you run changes upon her fortune, stocks, bonds and mortgages; upon Lord Gayville's coronet at her feet, or forty other coronets, to make footballs of if she pleased, — it would have been plausible; but the quality you have selected —

MRS. BLANDISH. Is one she has no pretensions to, therefore the flattery is more persuasive — that's my maxim.

BLANDISH. And mine also, but I don't try it quite so high — Sensibility to Miss Alscip! you might as well have applied it to her Uncle's Pig-iron, from which she derives her first fifty thousand; or the harder heart of the old Usurer, her father, from whom she expects the second. But come (*rings*) to the business of the morning.

Enter Prompt (the Valet de Chambre.)

Here Prompt — send out the chairmen with the billets and cards. — Have you any orders, Madam?

MRS. BLANDISH. (*delivering her letter*) This to Miss Alscip, with my impatient enquiries after her last night's rest, and that she shall have my personal salute in half an hour. — You take care to send to all the lying-in ladies?

PROMPT. At their doors, Madam, before the first load of straw.

BLANDISH. And to all great men that keep the house — Whether for their own disorders, or those of the nation?

PROMPT. To all, Sir — their secretaries, and principal clerks.

BLANDISH. (*aside to Prompt*) How goes on the business you have undertaken for Lord Gayville?

PROMPT. I have convey'd his letter, and expect this morning to get an answer.

BLANDISH. He does not think me in the secret?

PROMPT. Mercy forbid you should be! (*archly.*)

BLANDISH. I should never forgive your meddling. —

PROMPT. Oh! never, never!

BLANDISH. (*aloud*) Well, dispatch. —

MRS. BLANDISH. Hold! — apropos, to the lying-in list — at Mrs. Barbara Winterbloom's to enquire after the Angola kittens, and the last hatch of Java sparrows.

PROMPT. (*Reading his memorandum as he goes out*) Ladies in the straw — Ministers, &c. — Old Maids, Cats and Sparrows; never had a better list of how d'ye's since I had the honour to collect for the Blandish family. [Exit.

MRS. BLANDISH. These are the attentions that establish valuable friendships in female life. By adapting myself to the whims of one, submitting to the jest of another, assisting the little plots of a third, and taking part against the husbands with all, I am become an absolute essential in the polite world; the very soul of every fashionable party in town or country.

BLANDISH. The country! Pshaw! Time thrown away.

MRS. BLANDISH. Time thrown away! As if women of fashion left London, to turn freckled shepherdeses. — No, no; cards, cards and backgammon, are the delights of rural life; and slightly as you may think of my skill, at the year's end I am no inconsiderable sharer in the pinmoney of my society.

BLANDISH. A paltry resource — Gambling is a damn'd trade, and I have done with it.

MRS. BLANDISH. Indeed!

BLANDISH. Yes, 'twas high time. — The women don't pay. — And as for the men, the age grows circumspect in proportion to it's poverty: It's odds but one loses a character to establish a debt, and must fight a duel to obtain the payment. I have a thousand better plans, but two principal ones. — And I am only at a loss which to chuse.

MRS. BLANDISH. Out with them, I beseech you.

BLANDISH. Whether I shall marry my friend's intended bride, or his sister.

MRS. BLANDISH. Marry his intended bride? — What, pig-iron and usury? — Your opinion of her must advance your addressee admirably.

BLANDISH. My Lord's opinion of her will advance them; he can't bear the sight of her, and, in defiance of his uncle Sir Clement Flint's eagerness for the match, is running mad after an adventure, which I, who am his confidant, shall keep going till I determine. — There's news for you.

MRS. BLANDISH. And his sister, Lady Emily, the alternative! The first match in England in beauty, wit, and accomplishment.

BLANDISH. Pooh! A fig for her personal charms, she will bring me connexion that would soon supply fortune; the other would bring fortune enough to make connexion unnecessary.

MRS. BLANDISH. And as to the certainty of success with the one or the other. —

BLANDISH. Success! — Are they not women? Why even you can cajole them — What then must I do who have advantage of sex, and am equally ready to adore every feature of the face, or to fall incorporeally in love with the mind. — But no more of theory, I must away to practice. — And first for Gayville, and his fellow student Clifford, who is come home with a wise face, and a conceited confidence in his old ascendancy over his Lordship; but thanks to the accident that kept him two months behind, Mr. Monitor will find himself mistaken.

MRS. BLANDISH. Beware of the Monitor, notwithstanding, in another quarter. Lady Emily and he were acquainted at the age of first impressions.

BLANDISH. I dare say he always meant to be the complete friend of the family, though without a single talent for the purpose. I question whether he ever made a compliment in his life.

MRS. BLANDISH. Oh, the brute.

BLANDISH. His game, I find, has been to work upon Lord Gayville's understanding; he thinks he must finally establish himself in his esteem, by inexorably opposing all his follies — Poor simpleton! — Now my touch of opposition goes only to enhance the value of my acquiescence. So adieu for the morning — You to Miss Alscip, with an unction of flattery fit for a house-painter's brush; I to Sir Clement, and his family, with a composition as delicate as æther, and to be applied with the point of a feather.

[Going.

MRS. BLANDISH. Hark you, Blandish, a good wish before you go: To make your success compleat, may you find but half your own vanity in those you have to work on!

BLANDISH. Thank you, my dear Letty; this is not the only *tap* you have hit me to-day, and you are right; for if you and I did not sometimes speak truth to each other, we should forget there was such a quality incident to the human mind.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II. *Lord Gayville's Apartment.*

Enter Lord Gayville and Mr. Clifford.

LORD GAYVILLE. My dear Clifford, urge me no more. How can a man of your liberality of sentiment descend to be the advocate of my uncle's family avarice?

CLIFFORD. My Lord, you do not live for yourself. You have an ancient name and title to support.

LORD GAYVILLE. Preposterous policy! Whenever the father builds, games, or electioneers, the heir and title must go to market. Oh the happy families Sir Clement Flint will enumerate, where this practice has prevail'd for centuries; and the estate been improved in every generation, tho' specifically spent by each individual!

CLIFFORD. But you thought with him a month ago, and wrote with transport of the match —— „Whenever I think of Miss Alscip, „visions of equipage and splendor, villas and hotels, the delights of independance and profuseness, dance in my imagination.“

LORD GAYVILLE. It is true, I was that dissipated, fashionable wretch.

CLIFFORD. Come, this reserve betrays a consciousness of having acted wrong: You wou'd not hide what wou'd give me pleasure: But I'll not be officious.

LORD GAYVILLE. Hear me without severity, and I'll tell you all. Such a woman, such an assemblage of all that's lovely in the sex! —

CLIFFORD. Well but — the who, the how, the where?

LORD GAYVILLE. I met her walking, and alone; and indeed so humbly circumstanced as to carry a parcel in her own hand.

CLIFFORD. I cannot but smile at this opening of your adventure — how many such charmers have we met in our former excursions from Cambridge! I warrant she had a smart hat, and a drawn up petticoat, like a curtain in festoons, to discover a new buckle, and a neat ankle.

LORD GAYVILLE. No, Clifford, her dress was such as a judicious painter wou'd chuse to characterize modesty. But natural grace and elegance stole upon the observation, and through the simplicity of a Quaker, shew'd all we cou'd conceive of a Goddess. I gazed and turn'd idolater.

CLIFFORD. (*Smiling*) You may as well finish the description in poetry at once; you are on the very verge of it.

LORD GAYVILLE. She was under the persecution of one of those beings peculiar to this town, who assume the name of gentlemen, upon the sole credentials of a boot, a switch, and round hat — The *things* that escape from counters and writing desks to disturb public places, insult foreigners, and put modest women out of countenance. I had no difficulty in the rescue.

CLIFFORD. And having silenced the dragon, in the true spirit of chivalry, you conducted the damsel to her castle.

LORD GAYVILLE. The utmost I could obtain was leave to put her into a hackney coach, which I followed unperceived, and lodged her in the house of an obscure milliner in a bye-street.

CLIFFORD. The sweet Cyprian retreat! Such a priestess of your goddess, I dare say, did not refuse access to the shrine.

LORD GAYVILLE. It is true, a few guineas made the milliner my own. I almost liv'd in the house; and often, when I was not suspected to be there, passed whole hours list'ning to a voice, that wou'd have captivated my very soul, tho' it had been her only attraction. At last——

CLIFFORD. What is to follow!

LORD GAYVILLE. By the persuasions of the woman who laugh'd at my scruples with an unknown girl, a lodger upon a second floor, I hid myself in the closet of her apartment. And the practiced trader assured me I had nothing to fear, from the interruption of the family.

CLIFFORD. Oh for shame, my Lord: whatever may be the end of your adventure, such means were very much below you.

LORD GAYVILLE. I confess it, and have been punish'd. Upon the discovery of me, fear, indignation and resolution agitated the whole frame of the sweet girl by turns—— I should as soon have committed sacrilege as have offered an affront to her person—— Confused—— overpowered—— I stammer'd out a few incoherent words—— Interest in her fortune—— respect—— entreaty of forgiveness—— and left her, to detest me.

CLIFFORD. You need go no farther. I meant to rally you, but your proceedings and emotion alarm me for your peace and honour. If this girl is an adventurer, which I suspect, you are making yourself ridiculous — If she is strictly innocent, upon what ground dare a man of your principle think farther of her? you are on a double precipice; on one side impell'd by folly, on the other —

LORD GAYVILLE. Hold, Clifford, I am not prepar'd for so much admonition. Your tone is changed since our separation; you seem to drop the Companion and assume the Governor.

CLIFFORD. No, my Lord, I scorn the Sy-cophant, and assert the Friend.

Enter servant, followed by Blandish.

SERVANT. My Lord, Mr. Blandish. [Exit.

CLIFFORD. (*significantly*) I hope every man will do the same.

BLANDISH. Mr. Clifford, do not let me drive you away — I want to learn *your* power to gain and to preserve dear Lord Gayville's esteem.

CLIFFORD. (*with a seeming effort to withdraw his hand, which Blandish holds*) Sir, you are quite accomplish'd to be an example. —

BLANDISH. I have been at your apartment to look for you — we have been talking of you with Sir Clement — Lady Emily threw in her word. —

CLIFFORD. (*disengaging his hand*) Oh, Sir, you make me too proud. (*aside*) Practised parasite!

[Exit.]

BLANDISH. (*aside*) Sneering puppy — (*To Lord Gayville*) My Lord, you seem disconcerted; has any thing new occur'd?

LORD GAYVILLE. No, for there is nothing new in being disappointed in a friend.

BLANDISH. Have you told your story to Mr. Clifford?

LORD GAYVILLE. I have, and I might as well have told it to the Cynic, my Uncle: he cou'd not have discourag'd or condemn'd me more.

BLANDISH. They are both in the right. I see things exactly as they do — but I have less fortitude, or more attachment than others: — The inclinations of the man I love, are spells upon my opposition.

LORD GAYVILLE. Kind Blandish! you are the confidant I want.

BLANDISH. What has happen'd since your discovery in the closet?

LORD GAYVILLE. The lovely wanderer left her lodgings the next morning — but I have again found her — she is in a house of equal retirement, but of very different character, in the city, and inaccessible. I have wrote to her, and knowing her to be distress'd, I have enclos'd bank bills for two hundred pounds, the acceptance of which I have urged with all the delicacy I am master of, and by heaven without a purpose of corruption.

BLANDISH. Two hundred pounds, and Lord Gayville's name —

LORD GAYVILLE. She has never known me, but by the name of Mr. Heartly. Since my ambition has been to be loved for my own sake, I have been jealous of my title.

BLANDISH. And prithee by what diligence or chance, did Mr. Heartly trace his fugitive?

LORD GAYVILLE. By the acuteness of Mr. Prompt, your Valet de Chambre. You must pardon me for pressing into my service for this occasion, the fellow in the world fittest for it.

BLANDISH. You know I am incapable of being angry with you, — but that dog to practice upon my weakness, and engage without my consent!

LORD GAYVILLE. The blame is all mine. He is now waiting an answer to my letter — how my heart palpitates at the delay. —

Enter Prompt.

PROMPT. Are you alone, my Lord? (*Starts at seeing his master.*)

L. GAYVILLE. Don't be afraid, Prompt — your peace is made.

PROMPT. Then there is my return for your Lordship's goodness. (*Giving the letter*) This letter was just now brought to the place appointed, by a porter.

LORD GAYVILLE. By a Cupid, honest Prompt, and these characters were engraved by the point of his arrow! (*kissing the superscription.*)

„To — — Heartly, Esq.“ Blandish, did you ever see any thing like it?

BLANDISH. If her style be equal to her hand-writing — —

LORD GAYVILLE. If it be equal! — Infidel! you shall have proof directly. (*opens the letter precipitately*) Hey day! what the devil's here? my bills again, and no line — not a word — Death and disappointment, what's this?

PROMPT. Gad it's well if she is not off again — faith I never ask'd where the letter came from.

LORD GAYVILLE. Should you know the messenger again?

PROMPT. I believe I should, my Lord. For a Cupid he was somewhat in years, about six feet high, and a nose rather given to purple.

LORD GAYVILLE. Spare your wit, Sir, till you find him.

PROMPT. I have a shorter way — my life upon it I start her myself.

BLANDISH. And what is your device, firrah!

PROMPT. Lord, Sir, nothing so easy as to bring every living creature in this town to the window: a tame bear, or a mad ox; two men, or two dogs fighting; a balloon in the air — (or tied up to the ceiling 'tis the same thing) make but noise enough, and out they come, first and second childhood, and every thing between — I am sure I shall know her by inspiration.

LORD GAYVILLE. Shall I describe her to you?

PROMPT. No, my Lord, time is too precious — I'll be at her last lodgings, and afterwards half the town over before your Lordship will travel from her forehead to her chin.

LORD GAYVILLE. Away then, my good fellow. He cannot mistake her, for when she was form'd, nature broke the mould.

[Exit Prompt.]

BLANDISH. Now for the blood of me, cannot I call that fellow back; it is absolute infatuation: Ah! I see how this will end.

LORD GAYVILLE. What are your apprehensions?

BLANDISH. That my ferret yonder will do his part completely; that I shall set all your uncle's doctrine at nought, and thus lend myself to this wild intrigue, till the girl is put into your arms.

LORD GAYVILLE. Propitious be the thought, my best friend — my uncle's doctrine! but advise me, how shall I keep my secret from him for the present? He is suspicion personified; the eye of Sir Clement is a very probe to the mind.

BLANDISH. (*aside*) Yes, and it sometimes gives one a cursed deal of pain before he is convinced of touching a sound part. (*To Lord Gayville*) Your best chance would be to double your assiduities to Miss Alscip. But then dissimulation is so mean a vice. —

LORD GAYVILLE. It is so indeed, and if I give into it for a moment, it is upon the determination of never being her husband. I may despise and offend a woman; but disgust would be no excuse for betraying her. Adieu, Blandish; if you see Prompt first, I trust to you for the quickest communication of intelligence.

BLANDISH. I am afraid you may —— I cannot resist you. (*Exit Lord Gayville*) — Ah! wrong — wrong — wrong; I hope that exclamation is not lost. A blind compliance with a young man's passions is a poor plot upon his affections. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *Mrs. Sagely's House.*

Enter Mrs. Sagely and Miss Alton.

MRS. SAGELY. Indeed, Miss Alton, (since you are resolved to continue that name) you may bless yourself for finding me out in this wilderness. —— Wilderness! this town is ten times more dangerous to youth and innocence: every man you meet is a wolf.

MISS. ALTON. Dear Madam, I see you dwell upon my indiscretion in flying to London; but remember the safeguard I expected to find here. How cruel was the disappointment! how dangerous have been the consequences! I thought the chance happy that threw a retired lodging in my way: I was upon my guard against the other sex, but for my own to be treacherous to an unfortunate — cou'd I expect it?

MRS. SAGELY. Suspect every body, if you wou'd be safe —— but most of all suspect your-

self. Ah, my pretty truant — the heart that is so violent in its aversions, is in sad danger of being the same in it's affections, depend upon it.

MISS ALTON. Let them spring from a just esteem, and you will absolve me: my aversion was to the character of the wretch I was threaten'd with — can you reprove me?

MRS. SAGELY. And tell me truly now; do you feel the same detestation for this worse character you have made acquaintance with? This rake — this abominable Heartly? — Ah, child, your look is suspicious.

MISS ALTON. Madam, I have not a thought, that I will not sincerely lay open to you. Mr. Heartly is made to please, and to be avoided; I desire never to see him more — his discovery of me here; his letters, his offers, have greatly alarmed me. I conjure you lose not an hour in placing me under the sort of protection I solicited.

MRS. SAGELY. If you are resolved, I believe I can serve you. Miss Alscip, the great Heiress (you have heard of the name in your family) has been enquiring among decay'd gentry for a companion. She is too fine a lady to bear to be alone, and perhaps does not look to a husband's company as a certain dependance. Your musical talent will be a great recommendation — She is already apprized, and a line from me will introduce you.

MISS ALTON. I will avail myself of your kindness immediately.

PROMPT. (*without*) I tell you I have business with Mrs. Sagely — I must come in.

MRS. SAGELY. As I live here is an impudent fellow forcing himself into the passage.

MISS ALTON. Oh heaven! if Mr. Heartly thou'd be behind!

MRS. SAGELY. Get into the back parlour; be he who he will, I'll warrant I protect you.

[*Exit Miss Alton.*]

Enter Prompt (looking about.)

MRS. SAGELY. Who are you, Sir? What are you looking for?

PROMPT. Madam, I was looking — I was looking — for you.

MRS. SAGELY. Well, Sir, and what do you want?

PROMPT. (*still prying about*) Madam, I want — I want — I want —

MRS. SAGELY. To rob the house, perhaps.

PROMPT. Just the contrary, Madam — to see that all is safe within it. — You have a treasure in your possession that I wou'd not have lost for the world — A young Lady.

MRS. SAGELY. Indeed! — begone about your business, friend — there are no young ladies to be spoke with here.

PROMPT. Lord, Madam, I don't desire to speak with her — My attentions go to ladies of the elder sort — I come to make proposals to you alone.

MRS. SAGELY. *You* make propofals to me? Did you know my late husband, Sir?

PROMPT. Husband! My good Mrs. Sagely — be at ease — I have no more views upon you, that way, than upon my grandmother — My propofals are of a quite different nature.

MRS. SAGELY. Of a different nature! Why you audacious varlet! Here, call a constable —

PROMPT. Dear Madam, how you continue to mifunderftand me — I have a refpect for you, that will fet at nought all the perfonal temptations about you, depend upon it, powerful as they are — And as for the young Lady, my purpofe is only that you fhall guard her fafe. — I wou'd offer you a pretty snug houfe in a pleafant quarter of the town, where you two wou'd be much more commodioufly lodg'd — the furniture new, and in the prettiest tafte — A neat little fideboard of plate — a black boy, with a turban, to wait upon you. —

MRS. SAGELY. And for what purpofe am I to be bribed? I am above it, firrah. I have but a pittance, 'tis true, and heavy outgoings — My husband's decayed book-keeper to maintain, and poor old Smiler, that fo many years together drew our whole family in a chaise. — Heavy charges — but by cutting off my luxuries, and ftopping up a few windows, I can jog on, and fcorn to be beholden to you, or him that fent you. (*Prompt tries at the door, and peeps thro' the key hole.*) What wou'd the impertinent fellow be at now? Keep the door bolted, and don't ftand in fight.

PROMPT. (*aside*) Oh! oh! —— She is here I find, and that's enough —— My good Mrs. Sagely — your humble servant — I wou'd fain be better acquainted with you — in a modest way — but must wait, I see, a more happy hour. (*Aside, going out*) When honesty and poverty *do* happen to meet, they grow so fond of each other's company, it is labour lost to try to separate them.

[*Exit.*

MRS. SAGEEY. Shut the street door after him, and never let him in again.

Enter Miss Alton from the inner room.

MISS ALTON. For mercy, Madam, let me be gone immediately. I am very uneasy —— I am certain Mr. Heartly is at the bottom of this.

MRS. SAGELY. I believe it, my dear, and now see the necessity of your removal. I'll write your letter — and heaven protect you. Remember my warning, Suspect yourself.

MISS ALTON, *sola*. In truth I will. I'll forget the forbearance of this profligate, and remember only his intentions. And is Gratitude then suspicious? Painful lesson! A woman must not think herself secure because she has no *bad* impulse to fear: she must be upon her guard, lest her very best should betray her.

[*Exit.*

A C T II.

SCENE II. *An apartment in Sir Clement Flint's house.*

Lady Emily, Gayville and Clifford at Chess.

Sir Clement sitting at a distance pretending to read a parchment, but slyly observing them.

LADY EMILY.

CHECK — If you do not take care, you are gone the next move.

CLIFFORD. I confess, Lady Emily, you are on the point of compleat victory.

LADY EMILY. Pooh, I wou'd not give a farthing for victory without a more spirited defence.

CLIFFORD. Then you must engage with those (if those there are) that do not find you irresistible.

LADY EMILY. I cou'd find a thousand such; but I'll engage with none whose triumph I could not submit to with pleasure.

SIR CLEMENT. (*Apart*) Pretty significant on both sides. I wonder how much farther it will go.

LADY EMILY. Uncle, did you speak?

SIR CLEMENT. (*Reading to himself.*) „ And the parties to this indenture do farther covenant

and agree, that all and every the said lands, tene-
ments, and hereditaments — um ——— um“ ———
How useful sometimes is ambiguity! (*Loud enough
to be heard.*)

CLIFFORD. A very natural observation of
Sir Clement's upon that long parchment. (*Pauses
again upon the chess board*)

[*Lady Emily looking pensively at his face.*]

CLIFFORD. To what a dilemma have you
reduc'd me, Lady Emily. If I advance, I perish
by my temerity; and it is out of my power to
retreat.

SIR CLEMENT. (*Apart*) Better and better! —
To talk in cypher is a curious faculty.

CLIFFORD. Sir?

SIR CLEMENT. (*Still reading*) „In witness
whereof the said parties have hereunto interchan-
geably set there hands and seals this ——— um —
um — day of um ——— um ———.“

LADY EMILY. (*Resuming an air of vivacity*)
Come, I trifle with you too long ——— There's
your coup de grace ——— Uncle, I have conquer'd.
(*Both rising from the table.*)

SIR CLEMENT. Niece, I do not doubt it —
and in the style of the great proficient, without
looking upon the board. Clifford, was not your
mother's name Charlton? (*Folding up the parchment,
and rising*)

CLIFFORD. It was, Sir.

SIR CLEMENT. In looking over the writings
Alscrip has sent me, preparatory to his daughter's
settlement, I find mention of a conveyance from

a Sir William Charlton of Devonshire. Was he a relation?

CLIFFORD. My grandfather, Sir: The plunder of his fortune was one of the first materials for raising that of Mr. Alscip, who was steward to Sir William's estate, then manager of his difficulties, and lastly his sole creditor.

SIR CLEMENT. And no better monopoly than that of a man's distresses. Alscip has had twenty such, or I should not have singled out his daughter to be Lord Gayville's wife.

CLIFFORD. It is a compensation for my family losses, that in the event they will conduce to the interest of the man I most love.

SIR CLEMENT. Hey day, Clifford! — take care, don't trench upon the Blandish — *Your* cue, you know, is Sincerity.

CLIFFORD. You seem to think, Sir, there is no such quality. I doubt whether you believe there is an honest man in the world.

SIR CLEMENT. You do me great injustice — several — several — and upon the old principle that — „honesty is the best policy.“ — Self-interest is the great end of life, says human nature — Honesty is a better agent than craft — says proverb.

CLIFFORD. But as for ingenuous, or purely disinterested motives —

SIR CLEMENT. Clifford, do you mean to laugh at me?

CLIFFORD. What is your opinion, Lady Emily?

LADY EMILY. (*Endeavouring again at vivacity*) That there may be such: But it's odds they are troublesome or insipid. Pure ingenuousness, I take it, is a rugged sort of thing, which scarcely will bear the polish of common civility; and for disinterestedness — young people sometimes set out with it; but it is like travelling upon a broken spring — one is glad to get it mended at the next stage.

SIR CLEMENT. Emily, I protest you seem to study after me; proceed child, and we will read together every character that comes in our way.

LADY EMILY. Read one's acquaintance — delightful! What romances, novels, satires, and mock heroics present themselves to my imagination! Our young men are flimsy essays; old ones, political pamphlets; coquets, fugitive pieces; and *fashionable beauties*, a compilation of advertised perfumery, essence of pearl, milk of roses, and Olympian dew. — Lord, I should now and then tho' turn over an acquaintance with a sort of fear and trembling.

CLIFFORD. How so?

LADY EMILY. Lest one should pop unaware upon something one should *not*, like a naughty speech in an old comedy; but it is only skipping what wou'd make one blush.

SIR CLEMENT. Or if you did not skip, when a woman reads *by* herself and *to* herself, there are wicked philosophers who doubt whether her blushes are very troublesome.

LADY EMILY. (*To Sir Clement*) Do you know now that for that speech of yours — and for that saucy smile of yours, (*to Clifford*) I am strongly tempted to read you both aloud!

SIR CLEMENT. Come try — I'll be the first to open the book.

LADY EMILY. A treatise of the Houyhnhnms, after the manner of Swift, tending to make us odious to ourselves, and to extract more mirth from our imperfections — (*turning to Clifford*) Contrasted with an exposition of ancient morality address'd to the moderns: a chimerical attempt upon an obsolete subject.

SIR CLEMENT. Clifford! we must double down that page. And now we'll have a specimen of her Ladiship.

LADY EMILY. I'll give it you myself, and with justice; which is more than either of you wou'd.

SIR CLEMENT. And without skipping.

LADY EMILY. Thus then; a light, airy, fantastic sketch of genteel manners as they are; with a little endeavour at what they ought to be — rather entertaining than instructive, not without art, but sparing in the use of it —

SIR CLEMENT. But the passions, Emily. Do not forget what should stand in the foreground of a female treatise.

LADY EMILY. They abound: but mixed and blended cleverly enough to prevent any from predominating; like the colours of a shot lute-

string, that change as you look at it sideways or full: they are sometimes brighten'd by vivacity, and now and then subject to a shade of caprice — but meaning no ill — not afraid of a critical review: and thus, gentlemen, I present myself to you fresh from the press, and I hope not inelegantly bound.

SIR CLEMENT. Altogether making a perfectly desirable companion for the closet: I am sure, Clifford, you will agree with me. Gad we are got into such a pleasant freedom with each other, it is a pity to separate while any curiosity remains in the company. Prithee, Clifford, satisfy me a little as to your history. Old Lord Hardacre, if I am rightly informed, disinherited your father, his second son.

CLIFFORD. For the very marriage we have been speaking of. The little fortune my father could call his own was sunk before his death, as a provision for my mother; upon an idea that whatever resentment he might personally have incurred, it would not be extended to an innocent offspring.

SIR CLEMENT. A very silly confidence. How readily now, should you and I, Emily, have discover'd in a sensible old man, the irreconcilable offence of a marriage of the passions — You understand me?

LADY EMILY. Perfectly! (*aside*) Old petrifaction, your hints always speak forcibly.

SIR CLEMENT. But your uncle, the present Lord, made amends?

CLIFFORD. Amply. He offer'd to send me from Cambridge to an academy in Germany, to fit me for foreign service: Well judging that a cannon ball was a fair and quick provision for a poor relation.

SIR CLEMENT. Upon my word I have known uncles less confederate.

CLIFFORD. When Lord Gayvill's friendship, and your indulgence, made me the companion of his travels, Lord Hardacre's *undivided* cares devolved upon my sister; whose whole independant possession at my mother's death, was five hundred pounds — All our education had permitted that unhappy parent to lay by.

LADY EMILY. Oh, for an act of justice and benevolence to reconcile me to the odious man! Tell me this instant what did he do for Miss Clifford?

CLIFFORD. He bestow'd upon her forty pounds a year, upon condition that she resided with a family of his dependants in a remote county, to save the family from disgrace; and that allowance, when I heard last from her, he had threaten'd to withdraw, upon her refusing a detestable match he had endeavour'd to force upon her.

LADY EMILY. Poor girl!

SIR CLEMENT. Upon my word an interesting story, and told with pathetic effect. — Emily, you look grave child.

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) I shall not own it however. (*To him*) For once, my dear uncle, you

want your spectacles. My thoughts are on a diverting subject — My first visit to Miss Alscip; to take a near view of that collection of charms destined to my happy brother.

SIR CLEMENT. You need not go out of the room for that purpose. The schedule of an Heiress's fortune is a compendium of her merits, and the true security for marriage happiness.

LADY EMILY. I am sure I guess at your system — *That* union must be most wise which has wealth to support it, and no affections to disturb it.

SIR CLEMENT. Right.

LADY EMILY. That makes a divorce the first promise of wedlock; and widowhood, the best blessing of life; that separates the interest of husband, wife and child —

SIR CLEMENT. To establish the independent comfort of all —

LADY EMILY. Upon the broad basis of family hatred. Excellent, my dear Uncle, excellent indeed; and upon that principle, tho' the lady is likely to be your niece, and my sister, I am sure you will have no objection to my laughing at her a little.

SIR CLEMENT. You'll be puzzled to make her more ridiculous than I think her. What is your plan?

LADY EMILY. Why tho' her pride is to be thought a leader in fashions, she is sometimes a servile copyist. Blandish tells me I am her prin-

cial model; and what is most provoking, she is intent upon catching my manner as well as my dress, which she exaggerates to an excess that vexes me. Now if she will take me in shade, I'll give her a new outline, I am resolved; and if I do not make her a caricature for a printshop —

CLIFFORD. Will all this be strictly consistent with your good nature, Lady Emily?

LADY EMILY. No, nor I don't know when I shall do any thing consistent with it again, except leaving you two critics to a better subject than your humble servant.

[Curtseys, and exit with a lively air.]

SIR CLEMENT. Well, Clifford! What do you think of her?

CLIFFORD. That when she professes ill-temper, she is a very awkward counterfeit.

SIR CLEMENT. But her beauty, her wit, her improvement since you went abroad? I expected from a man of your age and taste, something more than a cold compliment upon her temper. Could not you, compatibly with the immaculate sincerity you profess, venture as far as admiration?

CLIFFORD. I admire her, Sir, as I do a bright star in the firmament, and consider the distance of both as equally immeasurable.

SIR CLEMENT. *(aside)* Specious rogue! *(To him)* Well, leave Emily then to be winked at through telescopes; and now to a matter of nearer observation — What is Gayville doing?

CLIFFORD. Every thing you desire, Sir, I trust; but you know I have been at home only three days, and have hardly seen him since I came.

SIR CLEMENT. Nor I neither; but I find he has profited wonderfully by foreign experience. After rambling half the world over without harm, he is caught, like a travell'd woodcock, at his landing.

CLIFFORD. If you suspect Lord Gayville of indiscretion, why do you not put him candidly to the test? I'll be bound for his ingenuoufness not to withhold any confession you may require.

SIR CLEMENT. You may be right, but he'll confefs more to you in an hour, than to me in a month for all that; come, Clifford, look as you ought to do at your interest — Sift him — Watch him — You cannot guess how much you will make me your friend, and how grateful I may be if you will discover —

CLIFFORD. Sir, you mistake the footing upon which Lord Gayville and I live — I am often the partner of his thoughts, but never a spy upon his actions. *[Bow and exit.]*

SIR CLEMENT. *(alone)* Well play'd, Clifford! Good air and emphasis, and well suited to the trick of the scene — He wou'd do, if the practical part of deceit were as easy at his age, as discernment of it is at mine. Gayville and Emily, if they had not a vigilant guard, would be his sure prey; for they are examples of the generous affections coming to maturity with their

stature; while suspicion, art and interest are still dormant in the seed. I must employ Blandish in this business — A rascal of a different cast — Below Clifford in hypocrisy, but greatly above him in the scale of impudence. They shall both forward my ends, while they think they are pursuing their own. I shall ever be sure of a man's endeavours to serve me, while I hold out a lure to his knavery and interest. [Exit.

SCENE II. *An Antichamber.*

ALSCRIP. (*without*) Dinner not order'd till seven o'clock — Bid the kitchen - maid get me some eggs and bacon. Plague, what with the time of dining and the French cookery, I am in the land of starvation, with half St. James's - Market upon my weekly bills.

Enter (while speaking the last sentence).

What a change have I made to please my unpleasable daughter? Instead of my regular meal at Furnival's Inn, here am I transported to Berkeley - Square, to fast at Alscrip House, till my fine company come from their morning ride two hours after dark — Nay, its worse, if I am carried among my great neighbours in Miss Alscrip's suite, as she calls it. My lady *looks* over me; my Lord walks over me; and sets me in a little tottering cane chair, at the cold corner of the table — Tho' I have a mortgage upon the house and furniture, and arrears due of the whole interest. It's a pleasure tho' to be well dressed. My daughter maintains all fashions are founded in sense — Icod

the tightness of my wig, and the stiffness of my cape, give me the sense of the pillory — Plaguy scanty about the hips too — And the breast something of a merrythought reversed — But there is some sense in *that*, for if one sex pares away in proportion where the other swells, we shall take up no more room in the world than we did before.

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT. Sir, Miss Alscip wishes to see you. She is at her toilet.

ALSCRIP. Who is with her?

SERVANT. Only Mrs. Blandish, Sir.

ALSCRIP. She must content herself with that company 'till I have had my whet — order up the eggs and bacon. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

Miss Alscip discovered at her toilet. Chignon, (her Valet de Chambre) dressing her head. Mrs. Blandish sitting by and holding a box of diamond pins.

MISS ALSCRIP. And so, Blandish, you really think that the introduction of Otahaite feathers in my trimming succeeded?

MRS. BLANDISH. Oh, with the mixture of those charming Italian flowers, and the knots of pearl that gather'd up the festoons, never anything had so happy an effect — It put the whole ball-room out of humour, and that's the surest test of good taste. Monsieur Chignon, that pin a little more to the front.

MISS ALSCRIP. And what did they say?

MRS. BLANDISH. You know it is the first solicitude of my life to see the friend of my heart treated with justice. So when you stood up to dance, I got into the thick of the circle — Monsieur, don't you think this large diamond wou'd be well placed just in the middle?

CHIGNON. Eh! non, Madame; ça ne relève pas — Dat give no relief to de weight of de curl — Full in de front un gros bouton von great nob of *diamond*! pardie ce feroit un accommodage a' la Polyphême; de big eye of de geant in de centre of de forehead.

MISS ALSCRIP. Chignon is right in point of taste, tho' not quite so happy in his allusions as he is sometimes.

CHIGNON. Ah! Madame, you have done von grande injure to my contrée: You go for von monthe, and bring away all de good taste — At Paris — all von fide — de diamond — de cap — de glance — de bon mot même — All von fide, nothing direct à Paris.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*Smiling at Chignon, and then turning to Mrs. Blandish*) Well! — And so —

MRS. BLANDISH. So it was all admiration! Elegant, says Lady Spite — It may do very well for Miss Alscip, who never looks at expence. The dress of a bridal princess! cries Mrs. Scanty, and for one night's wear too?

MISS ALSCRIP. Delightful! The very language I wish'd for —— Oh, how charmingly apropos was my accident! did you see when my trimming in the passe-pied of a cottillion came luckily in contact with Billy Skim's great shoe buckle —— How it ripp'd away?

MRS. BLANDISH. Did I see it?

MISS ALSCRIP. One of the great feathers stuck fast on the shoe, and looked for all the world like the heel wing of a Mercury in a pantomime.

MRS. BLANDISH. Oh! you witty creature, how you describe!

MISS ALSCRIP. It was a most becoming rent!

MRS. BLANDISH. And what a display of indifference; what an example for a woman of fortune, did you exhibit in the bustle of picking up the scattered fragments!

MISS ALSCRIP. When the pearls were trundling about, and I insisted on the company being no longer disturbed, but ~~there~~ ~~was~~ ~~what~~ remain'd for fairy favours to the maid who swept the room. He! he! he! Do you think Lady Emily wou'd have done that better?

MRS. BLANDISH. Lady Emily? poor girl! — How soon must she submit to be the humble second of the family.

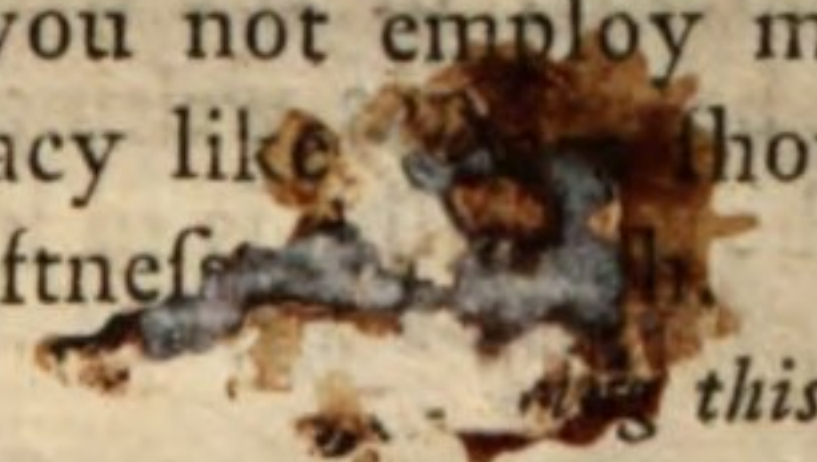
MISS ALSCRIP. He! he! he! Do you sincerely think so, Blandish? And yet it wou'd be strange if it were otherwise, for I cou'd buy her ten times over.

CHIGNON. Madame, vat humeure would you wear to day?

MISS ALSCRIP. Humour! Chignon? What am I dressed for now?

CHIGNON. The parfaite aimable, Madame: but by bringing de point of de hair more down to de eyebrow, or adding a littel blowse to de fides, I can give you de look severe, capricieuse — vat you please. —

MISS ALSCRIP. We'll put it off for half an hour, I am not quite decided. I was in the capricieuse yesterday — I believe I shall keep on the perfect amiable. (*Exit Chignon.*) Tiffany, take off my powdering gown — Ah! ho! — How the wench tugs — do you think you are pulling off the coachman's great-coat?

MRS. BLANDISH. My dear amiable! — do not let that sweet temper be ruffled — Why will you not employ me in these little offices. Delicacy like  should be waited upon by the softness

(During this speech exit Tiffany peevish.)

MISS ALSCRIP. I am promised a creature to be about me out of the common way.

MRS. BLANDISH. A new woman?

MISS ALSCRIP. No; something to be raised much higher, and at the same time fitted better to receive one's ill-humour. An humble companion, well born, well educated, and perfectly dependant, is a most useful appurtenance in the best families.

MRS. BLANDISH. Well, do not raise her to the rank of a friend, lest I should be jealous.

MISS ALSCRIP. You may be perfectly secure — I shall take particular care that friendship shall be out of the question on both sides. I had once thought of a restoration of pages to sit in scarlet and silver (as one reads in former times) upon the forepart of the coach, and to hold up one's train — but I have a new male attendant in a Valet de Chambre, who has possession of my bust — My two women will have the charge from the point of the shoulder to the toe — So my person being provided for — the Countess of Gayville shall have an attendant to wait upon her mind.

MRS. BLANDISH. I vow a most elegant and uncommon thought.

MISS ALSCRIP. One that can pen a note, in the familiar, the punctilious, or the witty — It's quite troublesome to be always writing wit for one's self — But above all she is to have a talent for music.

MRS. BLANDISH. Aye, your very soul is framed for harmony.

MISS ALSCRIP. I have not quite determin'd what to call her — Governante of the private chamber, keeper of the boudoir, with a silver key at her breast —

Enter Chignon.

CHIGNON. Madame, a young lady beg to know if you be visible.

MISS ALSCRIP. A young lady — It is not lady Emily Gayville?

CHIGNON. Non, Madame; but if you were absente, and I had the adjustment of her head, she wou'd be the most charmante personne I did ever see.

MISS ALSCRIP. Introduce her. (*Exit Chignon*) Who can this be?

MRS. BLANDISH. Some woman of taste to enquire your correspondent at Paris — or —

Enter Miss Alton.

Miss Alscrip curtsying respectfully, Miss Alton retiring disconcerted.

MISS ALSCRIP. Of taste indeed by her appearance? — Who's in the anti-chamber? Why did they not open folding doors? — Chignon, approach a fanteuil for the lady.

MISS ALTON. Madam, I come! —

MISS ALSCRIP. Madam, pray be seated —

MISS ALTON. — Excuse me, Madam —

MISS ALSCRIP. Madam, I must beg —

MISS ALTON. Madam, this letter will inform you how little pretensions I have to the honours you are offering.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*reads*) „Miss Alton, the „bearer of this, is the person I recommended as „worthy the honour of attending you as a companion (*eyes her scornfully*) She is born a gentle- „woman, I dare say her talents and good quali- „ties will speak more in her favour, than any

„words I could use — I am Madam, your most „obedient — um — um —.“ Blandish, was there ever such a mistake?

BLANDISH. Oh! you dear, giddy, *absent* creature, what could you be thinking of?

MISS ALSCRIP. Absent *indeed*. Chignon give *me* the fauteuil; (*throws herself into it*) young woman, where were you educated?

MISS ALTON. Chiefly, Madam, with my parents.

MISS ALSCRIP. But finish'd, I take it for granted, at a country boarding school; for we have, „young ladies,“ you know Blandish, „boarded and educated,“ upon blue boards in gold letters in every village; with a strolling player for a dancing master, and a deserter from Dunkirk, to teach the French grammar.

MRS. BLANDISH. How that genius of your's does paint! nothing escapes you — I dare say you have anticipated this young lady's story.

MISS ALTON. It is very true, Madam, my life can afford nothing to interest the curiosity of you two ladies; it has been too insignificant to merit your concern, and attended with no circumstances to excite your pleasantry.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*yawning*) I hope, child, it will be attended with such for the future as will add to your own — I cannot bear a mope about me. — I am told you have a talent for music — can you touch that harp — It stands here as a

piece of furniture, but I have a notion it is kept in tune, by the man who comes to wind-up my clocks.

MISS ALTON. Madam, I dare not disobey you. But I have been us'd to perform before a most partial audience; I am afraid strangers will think my talent too humble to be worthy attention.

A S O N G.

I.

For tendernefs framed in life's earliest day,
A parent's soft sorrows to mine led the way;
The lesson of pity was caught from her eye,
And e'er words were my own, I spoke in a sigh.

II.

The nightingale plunder'd, the mate-widow'd
dove,
The warbled complaint of the suffering grove,
To youth as it ripened gave sentiment new,
The object still changing, the sympathy true.

III.

Soft embers of passion, yet rest in the glow—
A warmth of more pain may this breast never
know!
Or if too indulgent the blessing I claim,
Let reason awaken and govern the flame.

MISS ALSCRIP. I declare not amiss, Blandish: only a little too plaintive — but I dare say

the can play a country dance, when the entire-ning is required — So Miss Alton you are welcome to my protection; and indeed I wish you to stay from this hour. My toilette being nearly finish'd, I shall have a horrid vacation till dinner.

MISS ALTON. Madam, you do me great honour, and I very readily obey you.

MRS. BLANDISH. I wish you joy, Miss Alton, of the most enviable situation a young person of elegant talents could be raised to. You and I will vie with each other to prevent our dear countess ever knowing a melancholy hour. She has but one fault to correct — the giving way to the soft effusions of a too tender heart.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Madam, a letter —

MISS ALSCRIP. It's big enough for a state packet — Oh! mercy, a petition — for heav'n's sake Miss Alton, look it over. (*Miss Alton reads*) I should as soon read one of Lady Newchapel's methodist sermons — What does it contain?

MISS ALTON. Madam, an uncommon series of calamities, which prudence cou'd neither see, nor prevent: the reverse of a whole family from affluence and content, to misery and imprisonment; and it adds, that the parties have the honour, remotely, to be allied to you.

MISS ALSCRIP. Remote relations! aye, they always think one's made of money.

MISS ALTON. That some years ago —

Enter another servant.

2d. SERVANT. A messenger, Madam, from the animal repository, with the only puppy of the Peruvians, and the refusal at twenty guineas.

MISS ALSCRIP. As I live the offspring of the beauteous Aza, who has so long been thought past hopes of continuing his family! Were he to ask fifty I must have him.

MRS. BLANDISH. (*offering to run out.*) I vow I'll give him the first kiss.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*stopping her*) I'll swear you shan't.

MISS ALTON. Madam, I was just finishing the petition.

MISS ALSCRIP. It's throwing money away — But give him a crown.

[*Exit with Mrs. Blandish striving which shall be first.*]

MISS ALTON. „The soft effusions of a too „tender heart.“ The proof is excellent. That the covetous should be deaf to the miserable I can conceive; but I should not have believed, if I had not seen, that a taste for profusion did not find its first indulgence in benevolence.

[*Exit.*]

A C T III.

SCENE I. *Miss Alscip's dressing room*
continued.

MISS ALTON.

THANKS to Mrs. Blandish's inexhaustible talent for encomium, I shall be relieved from one part of a companion that my nature revolts at. But who comes here? It's well if I shall not be exposed to impertinences I was not aware of.

Enter Chignon (aside.)

Ma foi, la voila — I will lose no time to pay my addresse — Now for de humble maniere, and de unperplex assurance of my contrée (*bowing with French shrug*) (*Miss Alton turning over music books*) Mademoiselle, est-il permis? may I presume, to offer you my profounde homage (*Miss Alton not taking notice*) Mademoiselle — if you vill put your head into my hands, I vill give a distinction to your beauty, that shall make you and me, de conversation of all de town.

MISS ALTON. I request, Mr. Chignon, you will devote your ambition to your own part of the compliment.

MR. ALSCRIP. (*without.*) Where is my daughter?

MISS ALTON. Is that Mr. Alscip's voice, Mr. Chignon? It's awkward for me to meet him before I'm introduc'd.

CHIGNON. Keep a little behind, Mademoiselle; he vill only passe de room — He vill not see through me.

Enter Alscrip.

Hah, my daughter gone already, but (*sees Chignon*) there's a new specimen of foreign vermin — A lady's valet de chambre — Taste for ever! — Now if I was to give the charge of my person to a waiting maid, they'd say I was indelicate, (*as he crosses the stage, Chignon keeps sideling to intercept his sight, and bowing as he looks towards him*) What the devil is Mounseer at? I thought all his agility lay in his fingers: what anticks is the monkey practising? He twists and doubles himself as if he had a raree-show at his back.

CHIGNON. (*aside*) Be gar no raree-show for you, Monsieur Alscrip, if I can help.

ALSCRIP. (*spying Miss Alton*) Ah! ah! What have we got there? Monsieur who is that?

CHIGNON. Sir, my lady wish to speak to you in her boudoir. She sent me to conduct you, Sir.

ALSCRIP. (*imitating*) Yes, Sir, but I will first conduct myself to this lady — Tell me this minute, who she is?

CHIGNON. Sir, she come to live here, companion to my lady — Mademoiselle study some musique — she must not be disturb'd.

ALSCRIP. Get about your business, Monsieur, or I'll disturb every comb in your head — Go tell my daughter to stay till I come to her.

I shall give her companion some cautions against saucy Frenchmen, firrah!

CHIGNON. (*aside*) Cautions! peste! you are subject a' cautions yourself — I suspecte you to be von old rake, but no ver dangerous rival.

[Exit.

ALSCRIP. (*to himself and looking at her with his glass*) The devil is never tired of throwing baits in my way.

(*She comes forward modestly.*)

By all that's delicious I must be better acquainted with her. (*He bows. She curtsies, the music book still in her hand*) But how to begin — My usual way of attacking my daughter's maids will never do.

MISS ALTON. (*aside*) My situation is very embarrassing.

ALSCRIP. Beauteous stranger, give me leave to add my welcome to my daughter's. Since Alscrip House was established, she never brought any thing into it to please me before.

MISS ALTON. (*a little confused*) Sir, it is a great additional honour to that Miss Alscrip has done me, to be thought worthy so respectable a protection as your's.

ALSCRIP. I cou'd furnish you with a better word than respectable. It sounds so distant, and my feelings have so little to do with cold respect — I never had such a desire — to make myself agreeable.

MISS ALTON. (*aside*) A very strange old man. (*To him more confused*) Sir, you'll pardon me, I believe Miss Alscrip is waiting.

ALSCRIP. Don't be afraid, my dear, enchanting diffident (zounds what a flutter am I in) don't be afraid — my disposition to be sure is too susceptible; but then it is likewise so dove-like, so tender, and so innocent. Come, play me that tune, and enchant my ear, as you have done my eye.

MISS ALTON. Sir, I wish to be excused, indeed it does not deserve your attention.

ALSCRIP. Not deserve it! I had rather hear you, than all the Italians in the Haymarket, even when they sue the managers, and their purses chink the symphony in Westminster Hall. (*presenting the harp.*)

MISS ALTON. Sir, it is to avoid the affectation of refusing what is so little worth asking for. (*Takes the harp and plays a few bars of a lively air. Alscrip kisses her fingers with rapture.*)

ALSCRIP. Oh! the sweet little twiddle, diddles!

MISS ALTON. For shame, Sir, what do you mean. (*Alscrip gets hold of both her hands, and continues kissing her fingers.*)

MISS ALTON. (*struggling*) Help!

MISS ALSCRIP. (*entering*) I wonder what my papa is doing all this time? (*starts*) (*A short pause*) *Miss Alscrip surprised. Miss Alton confused. Alscrip puts his hand to his eye.*

ALSCRIP. Oh, child! I have got something in my eye, that makes me almost mad. — A little midge — I believe. — Gad, I caught hold of

this young lady's hand in one of my twitches, and her nerves were as much in a flutter as if I had bit her.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*significantly*) Yes, my dear papa, I perceive you *have* something in your eye, and I'll do my best to take it out immediately — Miss Alton, will you do me the favour to walk into the drawing-room?

MISS ALTON. I hope, Madam, you will permit me at a proper opportunity, to give my explanation of what has passed. (*Retires.*)

MISS ALSCRIP. There's no occasion — Let it rest among the catalogue of wonders, like the Glastonbury thorn, that blooms at Christmas. — To be serious, papa — Though I carried off your behaviour as well as I cou'd, I am really shock'd at it — A man of your years, and of a profession where the opinion of the world is of such consequence —

ALSCRIP. My dear Molly, have not I quitted the practice of attorney, and turned fine gentleman, to laugh at the world's opinion; or, had I not, do you suppose the kifs of a pretty wench wou'd hurt a lawyer? My dear Molly, if the fraternity had no other reflections to be afraid of!

MISS ALSCRIP. Oh! hideous, Molly indeed! you ought to have forgot I had a christen'd name long ago; am not I going to be a countess? If you did not stint my fortune, by squand'ring your's away upon dirty trulls, I might be call'd your grace.

ALSCRIP. Spare your lectures, and you shall be call'd your highness, if you please.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Madam, lady Emily Gayville is in her carriage in the street, will your ladyship be at home?

MISS ALSCRIP. Yes, shew her into the drawing-room. (*Exit servant.*) I entreat, Sir, you will keep a little more guard upon your passions; consider the dignity of your house, and if you must be cooing, buy a French figurante. [*Exit.*]

ALSCRIP. Well said, my lady countess! well said quality morals! What am I the better for burying a jealous wife? To be chicken-peck'd is a new persecution, more provoking than the old one — Oh Molly! Molly! — Plague upon the example of an independent Heireis. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *The Drawing Room.*

MISS ALTON. (*alone*) What perplexing scenes I already meet with in this house? I ought, however, to be contented in the security it affords against the attempts of Heartly. I *am* contented — But, oh Clifford! It was hard to be left alone to the choice of distresses.

Enter Chignon, introducing Lady Emily.

CHIGNON. My lady Emily Gayville — Madame no here! Mademoiselle, announce, if you please, my lady.

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) Did my ears deceive me? surely I heard the name of Clifford — and it escaped in an accent! — Pray, Sir, who is that? (*to Chignon.*)

CHIGNON. Mademoiselle Alton, confidante of my lady, and next after me, in her fuite. (*Examines her head dress impertinently, Miss Alton with great modesty rises and puts her work together.*)

LADY EMILY. There seems to be considerable difference in the decorum of her attendants. You need not stay, Sir.

CHIGNON. (*as he goes out*) Ma foi, sa tête est passable — her head may pass.

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) How my heart beats with curiosity! (*Miss Alton having dispos'd her things in her work-bag, is retiring with a curtsy.*) Miss Alton, I am in no haste. On the contrary, I think the occasion fortunate that allows me to begin an acquaintance with a person of so amiable an appearance. I don't know whether that pert foreigner has led me into an error — but without being too inquisitive, may I ask if you make any part of this family?

MISS ALTON. Madam, I am under Miss Alscip's protection: I imagine I am represented as her dependant: I am not ashamed of humble circumstances, that are not the consequences of indiscretion.

LADY EMILY. That with such claims to respect, you should be in any circumstances of humiliation, is a disgrace to the age we live in.

MISS ALTON. Madam, my humiliation (if such it be) is just. Perhaps I have been too proud, and my heart required this self-correction. A life of retired industry might have been more pleasing to me; but an orphan — a stranger — ignorant and diffident, I prefer'd my present situation as one less exposed to misrepresentation. (*Bell rings*) I can no longer detain Miss Alscip from the honour of receiving your Ladyship. (*A respectful curtsy and exit.*)

LADY EMILY. There is something strangely mysterious and affecting in all this — what delicacy of sentiment — what softness of manners! and how well do these qualities accord with that sigh for Clifford! she had been proud — proud of what? — of Clifford's love. It is too plain. But then to account for her present condition? — He has betrayed and abandoned her — too plain again I fear. — She talk'd too of a self-corrected heart — take example, Emily, and recall thine from an object, which it ought more than ever to renounce. But here come the Alscip and her friend: lud! lud! lud! how shall I recover my spirits! I must attempt it, and if I lose my present thoughts in a trial of extravagance, be it of their's or my own, it will be a happy expedient.

Enter Miss Alscip and Mrs. Blandish.

Miss Alscip runs up to Lady Emily and kisses her forehead.

LADY EMILY. I ask your pardon, Madam, for being so awkward, but I confess I did not expect so elevated a salute.

MISS ALSCRIP. Dear Lady Emily, I had no notion of its not being universal. In France, the touch of the lips, just between the eyebrows, has been adopted for years.

LADY EMILY. I perfectly acknowledge the propriety of the custom. It is almost the only spot of the face where the touch wou'd not risk a confusion of complexions.

MISS ALSCRIP. He! he! he! what a pretty thought!

MRS. BLANDISH. How I have long'd for this day! — Come, let me put an end to ceremony, and join the hands of the sweetest pair that ever nature and fortune mark'd for connexion. *(Joins their hands.)*

MISS ALSCRIP. Thank you, my good Blandish, tho' I was determin'd to break the ice, Lady Emily, in the first place I met you. But you were not at Lady Dovecourt's last night.

LADY EMILY. *(affectedly)* No, I went home directly from the Opera: projected the revival of a cap; read a page in the trials of Temper; went to bed and dream'd I was Belinda in the Rape of the Lock.

MRS. BLANDISH. Elegant creature.

MISS ALSCRIP. *(aside)* I must have that air, if I die for it. *(imitating)* I too came home early; supped with my old gentleman; made him explain my marriage articles, dower, and heirs entail; read a page in a trial of Divorce, and dream'd of a rose colour equipage, with emblems of Cupids issuing out of Coronets.

MRS. BLANDISH. Oh, you sweet twins of perfection — what equality in every thing! I have thought of a name for you — The Inseparable Inimitables.

MISS ALSCRIP. I declare I shall like it exceedingly — one sees so few uncopied originals — the thing I cannot bear —

LADY EMILY. Is vulgar imitation — I must catch the words from your mouth to shew you how we agree.

MISS ALSCRIP. Exactly. Not that one wishes to be without affectation.

LADY EMILY. Oh! mercy forbid!

MISS ALSCRIP. But to catch a manner, and weave it, as I may say, into one's own originality.

MRS. BLANDISH. Pretty! pretty!

LADY EMILY. That's the art — Lord, if one liv'd entirely upon one's own whims, who would not be run out in a twelve-month?

MISS ALSCRIP. Dear Lady Emily, don't you doat upon folly?

LADY EMILY. To extacy. I only despair of seeing it well kept up.

MISS ALSCRIP. I flatter myself there is no great danger of that.

LADY EMILY. You are mistaken. We have, 'tis true, some examples of the extravaganza in high life that no other country can match; but withal, many a false sister, that starts as one would think, in the very hey-day of the fan-

tastic, yet comes to a stand - still in the midst of the course.

MRS. BLANDISH. Poor spiritless creatures!

LADY EMILY. Do you know there is more than one Dutchess who has been seen in the same carriage with her husband — like two doves in a basket, in the print of Conjugal Felicity; and another has been detected! I almost blush to name it.

MRS. BLANDISH. Bless us, where? and how? and how?

LADY EMILY. In nursing her own child!

MISS ALSCRIP. Oh! barbarism! — For heaven's sake let us change the subject. You were mentioning a reviv'd cap, Lady Emily; any thing of the Henry quatre?

LADY EMILY. Quite different. An English mob under the chin, and artless ringlets in natural colour, that shall restore an admiration for Prior's Nut Brown Maid.

MISS ALSCRIP. Horrid! shocking!

LADY EMILY. Absolutely necessary. To be different from the rest of the world, we must now revert to nature: Make haste, or you have so much to undo, you will be left behind.

MISS ALSCRIP. I dare say so. But who can vulgarize all at once? What will the French say?

LADY EMILY. We are to have an interchange of fashions and follies upon a basis of unequivocal reciprocity.

MISS ALSCRIP. Fashions and follies — oh, what a promising manufacture!

LADY EMILY. Yes, and one, thank heaven, that we may defy the edict of any potentate to prohibit.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*with an affected drop of her lip in her laugh*) He! he! he! he! he! he!

LADY EMILY. My dear Miss Alscrip, what are you doing? I must correct you as I love you. Sure you must have observed the drop of the under-lip is exploded since Lady Simpermode broke a tooth — (*Sets her mouth affectedly*) — I am preparing the cast of the lips for the ensuing winter — thus — It is to be called the Paphian mimp.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*imitating*) I swear I think it pretty — I must try to get it.

LADY EMILY. Nothing so easy. It is done by one cabalistical word like a metamorphosis in the fairy tales. You have only, when before your glass, to keep pronouncing to yourself nimini - primini — the lips cannot fail of taking their plie.

MISS ALSCRIP. Nimini - pimini — imini, mimini — oh, it's delightfully enfantine — and so innocent, to be kissing one's own lips.

LADY EMILY. You have it to a charm — does it not become her infinitely, Mrs Blandish?

MRS. BLANDISH. Our friend's features must succeed in every grace; but never so much as in a quick change of extremes.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Madam, Lord Gayville desires to know if you are at home?

MISS ALSCRIP. A strange formality;

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) No brother ever came more opportunely to a sister's relief, „I have fool'd it to the top of my bent.“

MISS ALSCRIP. Desire Miss Alton to come to me. (*Exit servant*) Lady Emily, you must not blame me; I am supporting the cause of our sex, and must punish a lover for some late inattentions — I shall not see him.

LADY EMILY. Oh cruel! (*Sees Miss Alton, who enters*) Miss Alscrip you have certainly the most elegant companion in the world.

MISS ALSCRIP. Dear, do you think so? an ungain, dull sort of a body, in my mind; but we'll try her in the present business. Miss Alton, you must do me a favour. — I want to plague my husband that is to be — you must take my part — you must *double me* like a second actress at Paris, when the first has the vapours.

MISS ALTON. Madam!

MISS ALSCRIP. Oh never look alarmed — It is only to convey my refusal of his visit, and to set his alarms afloat a little — particularly with jealousy, that's the master torment.

MISS ALTON. Really Madam, the task you wou'd impose upon me —

MISS ALSCRIP. Will be a great improvement to *you*, and quite right for me. Tease —

tease, and tame, is a rule without exception from the keeper of the lions to the teacher of a piping bulfinch.

MRS. BLANDISH. But you hard - hearted thing, will you name any object for his jealousy?

MISS ALSCRIP. No, keep him there in the dark — Always keep your creature in the dark — That's another secret of taming — Don't be grave, Lady Emily — (*whose attention is fixed on Miss Alton*) Your brother's purgatory shall be short, and I'll take the reconciliation scene upon myself.

LADY EMILY. (*endeavouring to recover herself*) I cannot but pity him; especially as I am sure, that do what you will, he will always regard you with the same eyes. And so, my sweet sister, I leave him to your mercy, and to that of your representative, whose disposition, if I have any judgment, is ill suited to a task of severity.

MRS. BLANDISH. Dear Lady Emily carry me away with you. When a lover is coming, it shall never be said I am in the way.

LADY EMILY. I am at your orders (*looking at Miss Alton*) (*aside*) What a suspense am I to suffer? a moment more and I shall betray myself — adieu, Miss Alscrip.

MISS ALSCRIP. Call Lady Emily's servants.

LADY EMILY. You sha'n't stir — remember nimini primini. [Exit.

MRS. BLANDISH. (*coming back and squeezing Miss Alscrip's hand, in a half whisper*) She'd give her eyes to be like you. [Exit.

MISS ALSCRIP. Now for it, Miss Alton — Only remember that you are doubling *me* the woman he adores.

MISS ALTON. Indeed, Madam, I am quite incapable of executing your orders to your satisfaction. The utmost I can undertake is a short message.

MISS ALSCRIP. Never fear. (*Knock at the door.*) There he comes — Step aside and I'll give you your very words. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lord Gayville, conducted by a Servant.

LORD GAYVILLE. So, now to get thorough this piece of drudgery. There's a meanness in my proceeding, and my compunction is just. Oh, the dear lost possessor of my heart! lost, irrecoverably lost!

Enter Miss Alton from the bottom of the scene.

MISS ALTON. A pretty employment I am sent upon.

LORD GAYVILLE. (*to himself*) Could she but know the sacrifice I am ready to make?

MISS ALTON. (*to herself*) The very picture of a lover, if absence of mind marks one. It is unpleasant for me to interrupt a man I never saw, but I shall deliver my message very concisely. — My Lord —

LORD GAYVILLE. (*turning*) Madam. (*both start and stand in surprise*) Astonishment! Miss Alton! my charming fugitive!

MISS ALTON. How! Mr. Heartly — Lord Gayville!

LORD GAYVILLE. My joy and my surprize are alike unutterable. But I conjure you, Madam, tell me by what strange circumstance do I meet you here?

MISS ALTON. (*aside*) Now assist me, honest pride! assist me resentment.

LORD GAYVILLE. You spoke to me — Did you know me?

MISS ALTON. No otherwise, my Lord, than as Miss Alscip's lover. I had a message from her to your lordship.

LORD GAYVILLE. For heaven's sake, Madam, in what capacity?

MISS ALTON. In one, my Lord, not very much above the class of a servant.

LORD GAYVILLE. Impossible, sure! It is to place the brilliant below the foil — to make the inimitable work of nature secondary to art and defect.

MISS ALTON. It is to take refuge in a situation that offers me security against suspicious obligation; against vile design; against the attempts of a seducer — It is to exercise the patience, that the will, and perhaps the favour of heaven, meant to try.

LORD GAYVILLE. Cruel, cruel to yourself and me — Could I have had a happiness like that of assisting you against the injustice of fortune — and when to be thus degraded was the alternative. —

MISS ALTON. My Lord, it is fit I should be explicit. Reflect upon the language you have held to *me*; view the character in which you present yourself to this family; and then pronounce in whose breast we must look for a sense of degradation.

LORD GAYVILLE. In mine, and mine alone. I confess it — Hear nevertheless my defence — My actions are all the result of love. And culpable as I may seem, my conscience does not reproach me with —

MISS ALTON. Oh, my Lord, I readily believe you — You are above its reproaches — qualities that are infamous and fatal, in one class of life, create applause and conscientious satisfaction in another.

LORD GAYVILLE. Infamous and fatal qualities! What means my lovely accuser?

MISS ALTON. That to steal or stab is death in common life: but when one of your lordship's degree sets his hard heart upon the destruction of a woman, how glorious is his success! How consummate his triumph! When he can follow the theft of her affections by the murder of her honour.

Miss Alscrip enters softly behind.

MISS ALSCRIP. I wonder how it goes on.

LORD GAYVILLE. Exalted! Adorable woman!

MISS ALSCRIP. Adorable! Aye! I thought how 'twou'd be!

LORD GAYVILLE. Hear me! I conjure you —

MISS ALSCRIP. Not a word, if she knows her business.

MISS ALTON. My Lord! I have heard too much.

MISS ALSCRIP. Brava. I cou'd not have play'd it better myself.

LORD GAYVILLE. Oh! Still more charming than severe. [Kneels.

MISS ALSCRIP. Humph! I hope he means me though.

LORD GAYVILLE. The character in which you see me here makes me appear more odious to myself, if possible, than I am to you.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*behind*) By all that's treacherous I doubt it.

MISS ALTON. Desist, my Lord — Miss Alscip has a claim. —

MISS ALSCRIP. Aye, now for it.

LORD GAYVILLE. By heav'n, she is my aversion. It is my family on whom I am dependant that has betray'd me into these cursed addresses — Accept my contrition — pity a wretch struggling with the complicated torments of passion, shame, penitence and despair.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*comes forward*) (*all stand confused*) I never saw a part better doubled in my life!

LORD GAYVILLE. Confusion! What a light do I appear in to them both. How shall I redeem myself, even in my own opinion?

MISS ALSCRIP. (*looking at Lord Gayville*) Expressive dignity! (*looking at Miss Alton*) Sweet simplicity! Amiable diffidence! — „She should execute my commands most awkwardly.“

LORD GAYVILLE. (*aside*) There is but one way. — (*to Miss Alscrip*) Madam, your sudden entrance has effected a discovery which with shame I confess ought to have been made before — The lady who stands there is in possession of my heart. If it is a crime to adore her, I am the most guilty wretch on earth — Pardon me if you can; my sincerity is painful to me — But in this crisis it is the only atonement I can offer.

(*Bows and exit.*)

MISS ALSCRIP. (*after a pause*) Admirable! — Perfect! The most finish'd declaration, I am convinc'd, that ever was made from beggarly nobility to the woman who was to make his fortune — the Lady who stands there — the lady — Madam — I am in patient expectation for the sincerity of your ladyship's atonement.

MISS ALTON. I am confounded at the strange occurrences that have happen'd; but be assured you see in me an innocent, and most unwilling rival.

MISS ALSCRIP. Rival! better and better! — You — you give me uneasiness! You moppet — you coquet of the side table to catch the gawkey heir of the family, when he comes from school at

Christmas — You — you — you vile seducer of my good old honour'd father! (*cries*) (*in a passion again*) What, is my lady dumb? Hussy? Have you the insolence to hold your tongue?

MISS ALTON. Madam, I just now offer'd to justify this scene; I thought it the part of duty to myself, and respect to you. But your behaviour has now left but one sentiment upon my mind.

MISS ALSCRIP. And what is that, Madam?

MISS ALTON. (*With pointed expression*) Scorn. [Exit.

MISS ALSCRIP. Was there ever any thing like this before? — and to a woman of my fortune? — I to be robb'd of a lover — and that a poor Lord too — I'll have the act reviv'd against witchcraft; I'll have the minx tried — I'll — I'll — I'll verify the proverb of the tragedy —

Hell has no fury like a woman scorn'd. [Exit.

SCENE III. *Alscrip's room of business.*

Alscrip and Rightly.

RIGHTLY. Upon all these matters, Mr. Alscrip, I am authorized by my client, Sir Clement Flint, to agree. There remains nothing but your favouring me with the inspection of the Charlton title-deeds, and your daughter's settlements may be engrossed.

ALSCRIP. I cannot conceive, my friend Rightly, any such inspection to be requisite. Have not I been in constant quiet possession?

RIGHTLY. Sir Clement insists upon it.

ALSCRIP. A client insist! and you an old practitioner, suffer such a demur to your infallibility! — Ah! in my practice I had the sure means of disappointing such dabblers and divers into their own cases.

RIGHTLY. How, pray?

ALSCRIP. I read his writings to him myself — I was the best reader in Chancery-lane for setting the understanding at defiance — Drew breath but once in a quarter of an hour, always in the wrong place, and made a single sentence of six skins of parchment — Shall I give you a specimen?

RIGHTLY. (*Smiling*) I have no doubt of your talent.

ALSCRIP. Then return to Sir Clement, and follow my example.

RIGHTLY. No, Mr. Alscrip, tho' I acknowledge your skill, I do not subscribe to your doctrine. The English law is the finest system of ethics, as well as government, that ever the world produced, and it cannot be too generally understood.

ALSCRIP. Law understood! Zounds! wou'd you destroy the profession?

RIGHTLY. No, I wou'd raise it. Had every man of sense the knowledge of the *theory*, to which he is competent; the practice wou'd revert to the purity of its institution, maintain the *rights*, and not promote the knavery of mankind.

ALSCRIP. (*aside*) Plaguy odd maxims. — Sure he means to try me. — (*to him*) Brother Rightly, we know the world, and are alone — I have lock'd the door (*in a half whisper.*)

RIGHTLY. A very useless precaution. I have not a principle nor a proceeding that I wou'd not proclaim at Charing - cros.

ALSCRIP. (*aside*) No! then I'll pronounce you the most filly, or the most impudent fellow of the fraternity.

RIGHTLY. But where are these writings? You can have no difficulty in laying your hand upon them, for I perceive you keep things in a distinguish'd regularity.

ALSCRIP. Yes, I have distinct repositories for all papers, and especially title deeds — Some in drawers — Some in closets — (*aside*) and a few under ground.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*rattling at the door*) What makes you lock the door, Sir? I must speak to you this instant.

ALSCRIP. One moment child, and I'll be ready for you. (*Turning again to Rightly as to dissuade him.*)

MISS ALSCRIP. (*still rattling at the door*) Don't tell me of moments — let me in.

ALSCRIP. Wheugh! What impatient devil possesses the girl — Stay a moment I tell you — (*turns again to Rightly.*)

RIGHTLY. (*cooly*) If the thoughts of the wedding - day make any part of the young Lady's

impatience, you take a bad way, Mr. Alscrip, to satisfy it; for I tell you plainly our business cannot be completed till I see these writings.

ALSCRIP. (*aside*) Confound the old hound — how he sticks to his scent.

Miss Alscrip still at the door.

ALSCRIP. I am coming I tell you. (*Opens a bureau in a confused hurry, shuffles papers about, puts one into Rightly's hand*) There, if this whim must be indulged, step into the next room — You who know the material parts of a parchment lie in a nutshell, will look it over in ten minutes. (*Puts him into another room.*)

MISS ALSCRIP. I won't wait another instant whatever you are about — Let me in. — —

ALSCRIP. (*opening the door*) Sex, and vehemence! What is the matter now?

Enter Miss Alscrip in the most violent emotion.

MISS ALSCRIP. So, Sir; yes, Sir; you have done finely by me indeed, you are a pattern for fathers — a precious match you had provided. (*Walking about.*)

ALSCRIP. What the devil's the matter?

MISS ALSCRIP. (*running on*) I that with 50,000 independent pounds left myself in a father's hands — a thing unheard of, and waited for a husband with unparalleled patience till I was of age —

ALSCRIP. What the devil's the matter?

MISS ALSCRIP. (*following him about*) I that at fourteen might have married a French Marquis, my governess told me he was — for all he was her brother —

ALSCRIP. Gad a mercy, governess —

MISS ALSCRIP. And as for commoners, had not I the choice of the market? And the handsome Irish Colonel at Bath, that had carried off six heiresses before, for himself and friends, and wou'd have found his way to Gretna-green blindfold!

ALSCRIP. (*aside*) Gad I wish you were there now with all my heart — What the devil is at the bottom of all this?

MISS ALSCRIP. Why Lord Gayville is at the bottom — And your hussy that you were so sweet upon this morning, is at the bottom! a treacherous minx! — I sent her only for a little innocent diversion as my double —

ALSCRIP. Your what?

MISS ALSCRIP. Why, my double, to vex him.

ALSCRIP. Double! this is the most useless attendant you have had yet. — Gad I'll start you single handed in the art of vexation against any ten women in England.

MISS ALSCRIP. I caught them, just as I did you.

ALSCRIP. Is that all? Gad I don't see much in that.

MISS ALSCRIP. Not much? what, a woman of my fortune and accomplishments turn'd off — rejected — renounc'd —

ALSCRIP. How! renounc'd? has he broke the contract! — Will you prove he has broke the contract?

MISS ALSCRIP. Aye. Now my dear papa, you take a tone that becomes you; now the blood of the Alscrips rises; — rises, as it ought; you mean to fight him directly, don't you?

ALSCRIP. Oh yes, I'm his man — I'll shew you a lawyer's challenge, sticks and staves, guns, swords, daggers, poinards, knives, scissars and bodkins. I'll put more weapons into a bit of paper, six inches square, than wou'd stock the armory of the Tower.

MISS ALSCRIP. Pistols! — Don't talk to me of any thing but pistols, — my dear papa, who shall be your second?

ALSCRIP. I'll have two — John Doe, and Richard Roe — as pretty fellows as any in England to see fair play, and as us'd to the differences of good company. — They shall greet him with their *fieri facias* — so don't be cast down, Molly, I'll answer for damages to indemnify our loss of temper and reputation — he shall have a *fi-fa* before to-morrow night.

MISS ALSCRIP. Fiery faces and damages — What does your Westminster-hall gibberish mean? — Are a woman's feelings to be satisfied with a *fi-fa* — you old insensible — you have no sense of family honour — no tender affections.

ALSCRIP. Gad you have enough for us both, when you want your father to be shot through the head — but stand out of the way, here's a species of family honour more necessary to be taken care of — If we were to go to law, this wou'd be a precious set off against us. (*Takes up the deed as if to lock it up*) This — why what the devil — I hope I don't see clear — Curse and confusion, I have given the wrong one — Here's fine work — Here's a blunder — Here's the effect of a woman's impetuosity.

MISS ALSCRIP. Lord, what a fuss you are in; what is in the old trumpery scroll?

ALSCRIP. Plague and parchment, old Rightly will find what's in it, if I don't interrupt him — Mr. Rightly — Mr. Rightly — Mr. Rightly — (*going to the door Rightly went out at.*)

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Sir, Mr. Rightly is gone.

ALSCRIP. Gone! whither?

SERVANT. Home, I believe, Sir — He came out at the door into the hall, and bade me tell your honour you might depend upon his reading over the deed with particular care.

ALSCRIP. Fire, and fury, my hat and cane — (*Exit servant.*) Here, my hat and cane (*stamps about.*)

MISS ALSCRIP. Sir, I expect, before you come home —

ALSCRIP. Death and devils, expect to be ruin'd — this comes of list'ning to you — The sex hold the power of mischief by prescription —

Zounds! — Mischief — Mischief — is the common law of womankind. *[Exit in a rage.]*

MISS ALSCRIP. Mercy on us — I never saw him more provok'd, even when my mother was alive. *[Exit.]*

A C T IV.

S C E N E I. *Alscip's Room.*

CHIGNON.

QUE diable veut dire tout ça — vat devil, all dis mean? — Monsieur Alscip enragé — Mademoiselle Alscip fly about like de dancing fury at de Opera — My littel musicienne, shut up, and in de absence of Madame, I keep de key of de littel Bastille — By gad, I vou'd rader have de custody of my pretty prisoniere than the whole college of cardinals — but vat have we here?

Enter Sir Clement and Clifford.

SIR CLEMENT. *(Speaking to a servant)* Mr. Alscip not at home, no matter — we'll wait his return — The French Valet de Chambre *(to Clifford)* — It may be of use to make acquaintance with him — Monsieur, how do you like this country?

CHIGNON. Ver good contrée, Sir, by and bye — when you grow a little more poor.

SIR CLEMENT. Is that a Parisian rule for improvement?

CHIGNON. Yes, Sir, and we help you to follow our example — In good times you hang, and you drown — In bad time you vill be like us. — Alway poor — alway gay — forget your politics — laugh at your grievances — take your snuff, vive la dissipation, — ver good country.

SIR CLEMENT. Thanks for your kind advice, Monsieur, you Frenchmen are so obliging, and so communicative to strangers — I hear there is a young lady come into this family — we don't exactly know in what capacity — could not you contrive that she shou'd pass through this room — or —

CHIGNON. (*aside*) By gar here be one more old rake after de littel musicienne.

SIR CLEMENT. Only for curiosity, — we never saw her, and have particular reasons — (*gives money.*)

CHIGNON. Ma foi, your reasons be ver expressive (*aside*) — but vat devil shall I do — open de cage of my little Rosignol — my pretty nightingale — no. Chignon — no — (*looking out*) ah, hah! La Tiffany — Now for de politique — begar I undertake your business — and make you de dupe of de performance.

[Exit with a sign to Sir Clement.]

SIR CLEMENT. So — Clifford — There goes as disinterested a fellow now as any in Europe. But hark you — Can you yet guess the purpose for which I brought you here?

CLIFFORD. I profess, Sir, I am in the dark. If it concerns Lord Gayville's secret.

SIR CLEMENT. Namely, that I have discovered, without your assistance, that this Dulcinea has started up in the shape of Miss Alscip's musical companion — Her name is Alton. (*leering*) I tell it you, because I am sure you did not know it — or if you had — a friend's secret ought to be sacred; and to keep it from the only person, who by knowing it cou'd save him from destruction, would be a new exercise of your virtue.

CLIFFORD. Sir, you will not know me. —

SIR CLEMENT. Tut, tut, don't do me such injustice — Come, all delicacy being over by my having made the discovery, will you talk to this girl?

CLIFFORD. For what end, Sir?

SIR CLEMENT. If you state yourself as Lord Gayville's friend, she will converse with you more readily, than she wou'd with me — Try her — find out what she is really at. If she proves an impostor of the refined artifice I suspect, that puts on humility to veil her purpose, and chastity to effect it — leave her to me. If she has no hold upon him but her person, I shall be easy.

CLIFFORD. Sir, let my compliance convince you how much I wish to oblige you. If I can get a sight of this wonder, I promise to give you my faithful opinion of my friend's danger.

Enter Chignon and makes a sign to Sir Clement, that the person he enquir'd after is coming.

SIR CLEMENT. Leave her with this gentleman — Come, Monsieur, you shall shew me the new room. *[Exit.*

CHIGNON. *(aside)* Vid dis gentleman — Vid all my heart — La Tiffany vill answer his purpose, and mine too. *[Exit. Clifford is looking at the furniture of the room.*

Enter Tiffany.

TIFFANY. What does the Frenchman mean by gentlemen wanting me, and his gibberish of making soft eyes — I hope I know the exercise of my eyes without his instruction — hah! I vow, a clever looking man.

CLIFFORD. *(seeing Tiffany)* A good smart girl; but not altogether quaker-like in her apparel, nor does her air quite answer my conception of a goddess.

TIFFANY. *(aside)* How he examines me! so much the better — I shall lose nothing by that, I believe.

CLIFFORD. Faith a pretty attracting countenance — but for that apprehensive and timid look — that awe impressing modesty, my friend so forcibly describ'd.

[Tiffany adjusts herself and pulls up.

CLIFFORD. *(aside)* There is no judging of that wonderful sex by rational rules — Her silence marks diffidence; deuce take me if I know how to begin for fear of offending her reserve.

TIFFANY. (*aside*) I have been told pertness became me — I'll try, I'm resolved. (*to him*) I hear, Sir, you had something to say to a young person in this house — that — that — (*looking down at the same time archly*) I cou'd not but take the description to myself — I am ready to hear any thing a gentleman has to say.

CLIFFORD. (*aside*) Thank my stars, my scruples are relieved.

TIFFANY. Am I mistaken, Sir? Pray, whom was you enquiring after?

CLIFFORD. Oh! certainly you, my pretty stranger. A friend of mine has been robb'd of his heart, and I see the felony in your looks.

TIFFANY. (*simpering and coqueting*) Lord, Sir, if I had suspected you had come with a search warrant for hearts, I wou'd have been more upon my guard.

CLIFFORD. (*chucking her under the chin*) Will you confess, or must I arrest you?

TIFFANY. Innocent, Sir, in fact, but not quite so in inclination — I hope your own is safe.

CLIFFORD. And were it not, my smart unconscionable, would you run away with that also?

TIFFANY. Oh, yes, and an hundred more; and melt them all down together as the Jews do stolen goods to prevent there being reclaim'd — Gold, silver and lead; pray, Sir, of what metal may your's be?

CLIFFORD. (*aside*) Astonishing! Have I hit upon the moment when her fancy outruns her art! — Or has Gayville been in a dream? And are you really the young Lady that is the companion of Miss Alscip, that makes such conquests at first sight?

TIFFANY. Sir, if you mean the young Lady who has been named, however undeservedly, the flower of this family; who appears sometimes at these windows; and to be sure has been followed home by gentlemen against her inclinations — Sir, you are not mistaken.

CLIFFORD. (*aside*) It has been Gayville's madness or amusement then to describe her by contraries.

TIFFANY. I hope, Sir, you are not offended, I wou'd not be impertinent, tho' I am not so tasteless as to shy.

CLIFFORD. Offended, my dear? I am quite charm'd, I assure you. You are just what I did not expect, but wished to find you. You had been represented to me so improperly. —

TIFFANY. (*with pertness*) Represented improperly! Pray, Sir, what do you mean?

CLIFFORD. To rejoice in my mistake, I promise you — Nay, and to set my friend right in his opinion, so without further shyness on either part, let us be free upon the subject I had to talk over with you. You surely are not looking to lasting connections.

TIFFANY. (*with airs*) Sir, I don't understand you — I am not what you suppose, I assure

you — Connections indeed — I should never have thought of that — my character — my behaviour; connexions, I don't know what the word signifies.

SIR CLEMENT. (*without*) Clifford — are you ready?

CLIFFORD. I am at your orders, Sir.

TIFFANY. (*aside*) Deuce take this interruption!

SIR CLEMENT. (*without*) I shall not wait for Mr. Alscip any longer.

TIFFANY. (*aside*) Lud, lud, he gives me no time to come round again. (*Runs up to him confusedly*) It's very true, Sir, I wou'd not do such a thing for the world, but you are a man of honour, and I am sure wou'd not give bad advice to a poor girl who is but a novice — and so, Sir, (*hears Sir Clement entering*) put your proposal in writing and you may depend on having an answer.

[*Runs out.*]

Enter Sir Clement.

SIR CLEMENT. Well, Clifford, what do you think of her?

CLIFFORD. Make yourself perfectly easy, Sir: This girl when known can make no impression on Lord Gayville's mind; and I doubt not but a silk gown and a lottery ticket, had they been offer'd as an ultimatum, wou'd have purchased her person.

SIR CLEMENT. (*with a dry sneer*) Don't you sometimes, Clifford, form erroneous opinions of peoples' pretensions? Interest and foolish passion inspire strange notions — as one or the other prevails, we are brought to look so low, or so high —

CLIFFORD. (*with emotion*) That we are compell'd to call reason and honour to our aid —

SIR CLEMENT. And then —

CLIFFORD. We lose the intemperance of our inclinations in the sense of what is right.

SIR CLEMENT. (*aside*) Sententious impostor! (*to him*) But to the point.

CLIFFORD. Sir, I wou'd please you, if I cou'd — I am thinking of a scheme to restore Lord Gayville to his senses, without violence or injury to any one of the parties.

SIR CLEMENT. Let me hear it.

CLIFFORD. Why the wench being cut short of marketing by word of mouth (which she was doing in all due form when you came in) desired me to write proposals. I am inclined to do so. We will shew the answer to Lord Gayville, and depend upon it, there will be character enough display'd to cure him of the sentimental part of his attachment.

SIR CLEMENT. I like your idea — Sit down and put it into execution immediately —

[*Clifford writes.*]

SIR CLEMENT. (*to himself*) He is quick at invention — has a pretty turn at profession — A

proud and peremptory shew of honour that wou'd overpower prejudices — Thank heaven, my opinions of knavery are convictions!

CLIFFORD. (*Writing*) I am sorry to detain you, Sir.

SIR CLEMENT. (*looking at the furniture*) Oh! I am amusing myself better than you think — Indulging an edifying contemplation among the tombs of departed estates — (*Looking round the furniture, viz. closets that shew old writings tied up, shelves with boxes, labelled mortgages, lease and release, &c.*) What mouldered skins that will never see daylight again, and that with a good herald wou'd vie with Westminster-abbey in holiday entertainment. For instance now, what have we here? — Hah! The last remains of Fatland priory — Once of great monastic importance? A proverb of pride, sloth, and hypocrisy. After the reformation the seat of old English hospitality and benevolence — In the present century, altered, adorned, pull'd down, and the materials sold by auction.

CLIFFORD. Edifying indeed, Sir; your comments are not lost.

SIR CLEMENT. Here lie undisturbed in dust, the relicks of Court-baron castle, granted at the conquest to the family of Loftimount. The last of this ancient race having won twenty-seven king's plates, and represented the county in six parliaments, after many struggles died of the pistol fever — a disconsolate annuitant inscribed this box to his memory.

CLIFFORD. Ha! ha! ha! (*Rising*) I am quite concern'd to interrupt you, Sir, but you shall hear my letter (*reads*) „You have captivated a „young man of rank and fortune, but you are „discover'd, and his ruin and yours wou'd be the „consequence of pursuing any designs, that cou'd „impede his proposed marriage with Miss Al- „scrip — Throw yourself upon the generosity of „his family, and your fortune's made — Send „your answer (and let it be immediate) to me at „Sir Clement Flint's house —

„Yours, &c. &c. —

HENRY CLIFFORD.“

SIR CLEMENT. It will do very well, our French friend is the man to deliver it, and to bring the answer. I am going home, you'll overtake me. [Exit.

Enter Chignon.

CLIFFORD. (*sealing the letter*) You come apropos, Monsieur (*gives the letter with an air of mystery.*) Have the goodness to put this letter into Miss Alton's own hands.

CHIGNON. (*to himself*) Mademoiselle Alton! Peste! My trick has not passed.

CLIFFORD. To Miss Alton by herself — I am in all the secret.

CHIGNON. (*to himself*) Devil take Tiffany for making you so wise.

CLIFFORD. And you serve your Lady, when you serve me with Miss Alton — Monsieur, an answer as quick as possible — You will find

me at Sir Clement Flint's — it is only in the next street — and — you understand me — (*shaking his purse*) Alerte, Monsieur. [Exit.

CHIGNON. Understand you — Oui da! you talk de language universal (*imitating his shing the purse*) l'entre vois, I begin to see something — By gad I vill give de letter, and try de inclination of Madamoiselle la Musicienne — it dis be de duette she vill play, it take her out of the vay of Alscip, of Gayville, and of myself also — Voila le malheur — there — de misfortune — eh bien — when love and interest come acrofs — alway prefer de interest for to-day, and take de chance of de love to - morrow — dat is de humour of France.

SCENE II. *Sir Clement Flint's house.*

Enter Lord Gayville and Sir Clement.

LORD GAYVILLE. I am resolved to see Miss Alscip no more.

SIR CLEMENT. And I hope you are prepared with arguments to justify the cause of this breach, to me, and to the world.

LORD GAYVILLE. For my reconciliation with you, I hope your former partiality will return to my aid; and as for the world I despise it. The multitude look at happiness thro' the false glare of wealth and pomp: I have discovered it, tho' yet at a distance, thorough the only true medium, that of mutual affection.

SIR CLEMENT. No common place book formed from a whole library of plays and novels

could furnish a better sentence. Your folly wou'd shame a school-boy — even of the last age — In the present he learns the world with his grammar, and gets a just notion of the worthlessness of the other sex before he is of an age to be duped by their attractions.

LORD GAYVILLE. Sir, your prejudices —

SIR CLEMENT. My prejudices? — will you appeal to Clifford — here he comes — your friend — your other self.

Enter Clifford.

LORD GAYVILLE. And will Clifford, condemn the choice of the heart?

CLIFFORD. Never, my Lord, when justly placed — In the case I perceive you are arguing, I am ready to blush for you — nay, don't look grave — I am acquainted with your enchantress.

LORD GAYVILLE. You acquainted with her?

CLIFFORD. Yes, and if I don't deceive myself, shall make her break her own spell. I am in correspondence with her.

LORD GAYVILLE. You in correspondence with Miss Alton! — when? where? What am I to think of this?

CLIFFORD. My dear Lord, that she is the most arrant coquette, the most accomplished jilt, the most ready trafficker of her charms —

LORD GAYVILLE. Phrenzy and profanation — Such dignity of virtue, such chastity of sentiment —

SIR CLEMENT. Ha! ha! ha!

CLIFFORD. Phrenzy indeed! You have formed a creature of imagination, and like a true Quixote, think it real; you have talked to her of dignity, of virtue and chastity of sentiment, till you have taught her a lure she never dreamt of— Had you treated her at first as I did, she wou'd have put a card into your hand to inform you of her lodging.

LORD GAYVILLE. Clifford, what has betray'd you into calumny so unwarrantable and despicable?

SIR CLEMENT. Come, Gayville, I'll be plain with you, you have fillily let the girl raise her price upon you — but if nothing else will satisfy you, e'en pay it, and have done with her.

LORD GAYVILLE. Sir, her price is an unadulterated heart: I am afraid we cannot pay it betwixt us.

(Enter Chignon; delivers a letter to Clifford apart.)

CHIGNON. Alerte, Monsieur, I repete your word — Mademoiselle Alton, be all your own.

SIR CLEMENT. Come, Clifford, the contents: his Lordship braves the trial.

LORD GAYVILLE. What is this mighty scheme? and what is that paper to discover?

CLIFFORD. *(breaking open the letter)* Your Lordship shall be informed word for word *(Upon first sight of the contents he shews the utmost emotion)* Amazement! do I dream! can it be? who wrote this letter?

SIR CLEMENT. Oh! speak out Monsieur, we are all friends.

CHIGNON. De true Mademoiselle Alton to whom you charge me to give your letter — she open it — she turn pale — den red — den confuse — den kisse your name — den write, and bid me fly.

LORD GAYVILLE. Confusion, on confusion, what does all this mean? explain.

CLIFFORD. You must pardon me, I am disconcerted — confounded — thunder-struck — This letter is indeed of a different nature, from that I expected — I am more interested in Miss Alton's fate than your Lordship — my perplexity is not to be endur'd; friend, come with me instantly.

Exeunt Clifford and Chignon.

LORD GAYVILLE. Mystery, and torture! what am I to collect from this? *He* interested in the fate of Miss Alton? he her former acquaintance?

SIR CLEMENT. Why not — and her dupe also?

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT. Is Mr. Clifford gone, Sir?

LORD GAYVILLE. (*impatiently*) Who wants him?

SERVANT. A chairman with a letter, he will not deliver to a servant.

SIR CLEMENT. Call the fellow in. [*Exit Servant.*] Who knows but he may help us in our difficulties.

Chairman brought in with a letter in his hand.

LORD GAYVILLE. (*still impatiently*) Whom did you bring that letter from?

CLAIRMAN. Please your honour, I don't know; passing through the square, a fash flew up, and down came this letter and half a crown upon my head. It could not have fallen better, there's not a fellow in town more ready handed than I am at private business — So I resolved to deliver it safely — Is your honour's name Clifford?

LORD GAYVILLE. No indeed, friend, I am not so happy a man.

SIR CLEMENT. (*aside*) That letter must not be lost though. Here, my friend — I'll take charge of your letter. (*takes the letter*) Something for your pains.

CLAIRMAN. God blefs your honour, and if you want to send an answer, my number is forty-seven in Bond-street — your honour, I am known by the name of secret Tom. [*Exit.*]

LORD GAYVILLE. What is the use of this deceit? strong as my suspicion is, a seal must be sacred.

SIR CLEMENT. Our circumstances make an exception to your rule: when there is treason in the state, wax gives way. (*takes the letter, opens and reads it.*) Faith this is beyond my expectation — tho' the mystery is unfathomable, the aptness of it to my purpose is admirable — Gayville — I wish you joy.

LORD GAYVILLE. Of what?

SIR CLEMENT. Of conviction! if this is not plain! only hear (*reads*) „since my confused lines of a few minutes past, my perplexities redouble upon my spirits — I am in momentary apprehension of further insult from the Alscip family; I am still more anxious to avoid Lord Gayville“ (*pauses and looks at Lord Gayville*) „do not suspect my sincerity — I have not a thought of him that ought to disturb you.“ — Here she is, Gayville, look at her, through the true medium of mutual affection — „I have not a thought of him that ought to disturb you — Fly to me, secure me, my dearest Henry.“

LORD GAYVILLE. Dearest Henry!

SIR CLEMENT. (*reads on*) „Dearest Henry — In this call, the danger of your Harriet unites with the impatience of her affection.“

LORD GAYVILLE. Hell, and fury! this must be some trick, some forgery (*snatches the letter*) No, by all that's perfidious it is that exquisite hand that baffles imitation.

SIR CLEMENT. All, regular, strict, undeviating modern morals — common property is the first principle of friendship; your horse, your house, your purse, your mistress — nay, your wife wou'd be a better example still of the doctrine of this generous age. Bless fortune, Gayville, that has brought the fidelity of your friend and your girl to the test at the same time.

LORD GAYVILLE. Sir, I am not in a humour for any spleen but my own. What can this mean? It must have been a secret attachment for years — but then the avowal of a correspondence, and the confusion at receiving it — his coldness in traducing her; the passionate interest he express'd in her fate; the conviction of his second letter — It is all delirium. I'll search the matter to the bottom, tho' I go to Clifford's heart for it. *(Exit in great anger.)*

SIR CLEMENT. I'll after the precious fellow too — He is, a rogue above my hopes, and the intricacy of his snares excite my curiosity. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III. *Lady Emily's Apartment.*

Lady Emily discover'd reading.

It will not do. My eyes may run over a thousand subjects, but my thoughts centre in one. Ah! that sigh! that sigh from the fair sufferer this morning — I have found it echo in my own heart ever since.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Madam, Mr. Blandish.

LADY EMILY. Pooh! did you say I was at home?

SERVANT. Your Ladyship gave no orders to the contrary.

LADY EMILY. Shew him in. *[Exit servant.]* I must take up my air of levity again — It is the

only humour for a fellow who I sometimes allow to entertain me, but who never can get my esteem. I have more calls upon my affectation this unlucky day, than my real disposition would execute in a long life.

Enter Blandish.

LADY EMILY. Blandish, I am horridly peevish; have you any thing diverting in news or flattery.

BLANDISH. In the latter, Madam, nothing. My admiration has all the dulness of truth: but shew me what you think a flaw, and I'll try without flattery to convince you it is a beauty.

LADY EMILY. Tolerably express'd — but the idea of a faultless woman is false in point of encomium; she wou'd be respectable, awful, and unattracting. Odd as it may seem, a woman, to charm, requires a little dash of harmless imperfection. I know I have a thousand amiable faults that I wou'd not part with for the world. So try again: Something more new and refined.

BLANDISH. Examine my heart, Lady Emily, and you will find both: The novelty of disinterested passion, and refinement acquired by the study of you.

LADY EMILY. Rather better: but *that* does not please me much; the less, perhaps, as it is rather out of your way, and more in that of my friend your sister, who, I observe, always puts a compliment in full view — Yours generally come more forcibly, by affording us the pleasure of

finding them out — It is the excellency of a brilliant to play in the dark.

BLANDISH. Allow yourself to be the brilliant and attend to another allusion. With trembling ambition, I confess, that not content with admiring the jewel, I would wear it.

LADY EMILY. Wear it?

BLANDISH. As an appendage to my heart — Conscious of it's value, proud of its display, and devoted to its preservation.

LADY EMILY. Riddles, Mr. Blandish — but so let them remain — I assure you this hour is very inauspicious for explanation.

BLANDISH. I fear so. For in an hour, when Clifford proves treacherous, who can escape suspicion?

LADY EMILY. Clifford? for what purpose is he introduced in this conversation?

BLANDISH. You ask'd me for intelligence, the latest is, that Clifford has been detected in a clandestine intercourse with the object of Lord Gayville's secret passion; that he has betray'd the confidence of his friend and patron, and actually carried her off. (*aside*) Which Gayville knows by this time with all its aggravations, or Prompt has not been as active as he us'd to be.

LADY EMILY. (*with emotion.*) Blandish, this is a poor project. Clifford treacherous to his friend! You might as soon make me believe Gayville dispassionate, my uncle charitable, or you ingenuous.

BLANDISH. His conduct does not rest upon opinion, but proof; and when you know it, you must think of him with aversion.

LADY EMILY. Must I? Then don't let me hear a word more — I have aversions enough already — (*peevishly.*)

BLANDISH. It is impossible you can apply that word to one whose only offence is to adore you. (*kisses her hand.*)

Enter Clifford.

CLIFFORD. (*aside surprized*) Blandish so favour'd?

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) Perverse accident: what mistakes now will he make!

BLANDISH. (*aside*) The enemy has surprized me — but the only remedy in such emergencies, is to shew a good countenance.

CLIFFORD. I fear I have been guilty of an unpardonable intrusion.

BLANDISH. Mr. Clifford never can intrude, but though you had not come so apropos yourself — Lady Emily will bear testimony, I have not spared my pains to remove any prejudices she might have entertained.

LADY EMILY. Had you not better repeat in your own words, Mr. Blandish, all the obliging things you have said of this gentleman?

CLIFFORD. It is not necessary, Madam — If without robbing you of moments that I perceive are precious —

LADY EMILY. Sir?

CLIFFORD. I might obtain a short audience, (*looking at Blandish.*)

BLANDISH. (*aside*) He's devilish impudent — but he cannot soon get over facts, and I'll take care the conference shall not be long. (*to Lady Emily*) — Lady Emily; hear Mr. Clifford, and judge if I have misrepresented him — (*to Clifford*) When you want a friend, you know where to find him. [Exit.

LADY EMILY. This is an interview, Mr. Clifford, that I desire not to be understood to have authorised. It is not to *me*, you are accountable for your actions — I have no personal interest in them.

CLIFFORD. I know it too well.

LADY EMILY. (*peevishly*) Do not run away with the notion neither, that I am therefore interested in any *other* person's — You have among you, vex'd, and disconcerted me, but there is not a grain of partiality in all my embarrassment — if you have any eyes you may see there is not.

CLIFFORD. Happy Blandish, your triumph is evident.

LADY EMILY. Blandish, the odious creature — He is my abhorrence — You are hardly worse yourself in my bad opinion, tho' you have done so much more to deserve it.

CLIFFORD. How cruel are the circumstances that compel me to leave you under these impressions! — nay — more — at such a time to

urge a request, that during your most favourable thoughts of me wou'd have appear'd strange if not presumptuous. This is the key of my apartment. It contains a secret that the exigency of the hour oblig'd me against inclination or propriety, to lodge there. Should Sir Clement return before me, I implore you to prevent his discovery, and give to what you find within, your confidence and protection. Lord Gayville — but I shall go too far — the most anxious event of my life presses on me. I conjure you to comply, by all the compassion and tenderness nature has treasured in your heart — not for me — but for occasions worthy their display. (*Gives the key, which she receives with some reluctance*) and exit.

LADY EMILY. Heigho! — Its well, he's gone without insisting on my answer: I was in a sad flutter of indecision. What mysterious means he takes to engage me in a confidence which I could not directly accept! — I am to find a letter, I suppose — the story of his heart — Its errors and defence — My brother's name, also — to furnish me with a new interest in the secret, and one I might avow — One may dislike this art, but must be sensible of his delicacy. — Ah, when those two qualities unite in a man, I am afraid he is an over-match for the wisest of us — Hark! — sure that is the found of my Uncle's coach — (*looks out of the window*) 'Tis he — and now for the secret — Curiosity! Curiosity! innate irresistible principle in womankind, be my excuse, before I dare question my mind upon other motives. [Exit.

SCENE IV. *Another apartment.**Enter Lady Emily.*

Oh! lud, I could hardly tremble more at opening this man's apartment, were there a possibility of finding him within side. How do people find courage to do a wrong thing, when an innocent discovery cannot be prosecuted without such timidity.

*[Approaches the door timidly and unlocks it.]**Enter Miss Alton.*

LADY EMILY. Amazement. Miss Alton! what brought you here?

MISS ALTON. Madam, I was brought here for an hour's concealment; who I really am, I wou'd not, if possible to avoid it, divulge in this house. When you saw me last, you honour'd me with a favourable opinion — My story not explained at full, might subject me to doubts, that wou'd shake your candour. The circumstances in which I am involved, are strange, and have succeeded with the rapidity and confusion of a dream — Suffer me to recover for a moment my disorder'd spirits, and I *will* satisfy you farther.

LADY EMILY. What shall I do? — She is pale and ready to faint — I cannot let her be exposed in such a situation — Retire — you may rely upon me for present security — You know best your pretensions to my future opinion — *(hearing Sir Clement)* begone, or you are discover'd — *(Shut-her in and locks Clifford's door.)*

Enter Sir Clement.

SIR CLEMENT. Oh! the triumph of honour! Oh the sincerity of friendship, how my opinions are ratified — how my system is proved!

LADY EMILY. Oh, spirits, spirits, forsake me not — oh, for a moment's dissimulation!

SIR CLEMENT. There are some now who wou'd feed moroseness and misanthropy with such events; to me they give delight as convictions and warnings to mankind.

LADY EMILY. Of how superior a quality my good Uncle must be the benevolence you possess! it rises with the progress of mischief; and is gratified (upon principles of general good) by finding confidence abused, and esteem misplaced. Am I not right in attributing your joy at present to that sort of refinement?

SIR CLEMENT. Hah! and to what sensations, my good niece, shall be attributed the present state of your spirits? To the disgust you took to Clifford almost at first sight. It will not be with indifference, but pleasure, you will hear of his turning out the veriest rascal, the most compleat impostor, the most abandon'd — but hold! hold — I must not wrong him by superlatives — he is match'd too.

LADY EMILY. Really! — I congratulate you upon such a check of charity.

SIR CLEMENT. And I wish you joy, my pretty pert one, upon the credit your sex has

acquired, in producing this other Chef-d'œuvre—
Such a composition of the highest vices and the
lowest —

LADY EMILY. I know it will be in vain to
oppose the pleasure you take in colouring, by my
want of taste to enjoy it; but you may spare
your preparatory shading, and come to the points
with which I am not acquainted.

SIR CLEMENT. And pray, my incurious
niece, with what points are you acquainted?

LADY EMILY. That, before Mr. Clifford
went abroad, it is suspected his passions betray'd
him into a fault that must be shocking to your
morality, and that I'm sure it is not my intention
to justify. He ought to have resisted. It's a shame
we have not more examples of young men cor-
recting the frailties of womankind — I dare say
he neglected a fair opportunity of becoming a
prodigy.

SIR CLEMENT. I protest you have a pretty
way of dressing up an apology for the venial faults
of youth — and it comes with a peculiar grace
from a delicate lady of twenty.

LADY EMILY. Come, Sir; no more of your
sarcasms, I can treat wrong actions with levity,
and yet consider them with detestation. Prudes
and pretenders condemn with austerity. To the
collection of suspicions you are master of let me
add one — In a young lady of the delicacy, and
age you have described, always suspect the virtue
that does not wear a smile.

SIR CLEMENT. And the sincerity that wears one awkwardly — If you wou'd know the history of Clifford, ask but your brother; if of the precious adventurer he has carried off, enquire of Miss Alscip — We shall come up with her yet — woe be to any one who harbours her.

Enter Prompt hastily.

PROMPT. Joy to your honour, I see you have caught her.

SIR CLEMENT. Her! — who?

PROMPT. (*Lady Emily turning*) I ask your ladyship's pardon — Having only the glimpse of a petticoat, and knowing the object of my chase was in this house, I confess I mistook you.

SIR CLEMENT. In this house?

PROMPT. As sure as we are — She came in thorough the garden, under Mr. Clifford's arm — up the other stairs, I suppose — If my lady had been hereabouts — she must have seen her.

LADY EMILY. (*in confusion*) Yes, but unluckily, I was quite out of the way.

SIR CLEMENT. Such audaciousness passes credibility — Emily, what do you think of him?

LADY EMILY. That he is a monster. (*aside*) How my dilemmas multiply!

SIR CLEMENT. What, to my house! to his apartment here! I wonder he did not ask for protection in your's — What should you have said?

LADY EMILY. I don't know; but, had I been so imposed upon as to receive her, I should

scorn to betray even the criminal I had engaged to protect.

SIR CLEMENT. (*tries at the door, finds it lock'd*) Emily, my dear, do ring the bell to know if the housekeeper has a second key to this lock.

LADY EMILY. What shall I do?

PROMPT. She is certainly there, Sir, and cannot escape. Where can she better remain, till you can assemble all parties, confront them face to face, and bring every thing that has pass'd to a full explanation?

SIR CLEMENT. With all my heart; send and collect every body concerned as fast as possible — How I long for so complicated an exhibition of the purity of the human heart. Come with me, Emily, and help to digest my plan — Friends and lovers, what a scene shall we show you! *Takes Lady Emily under the arm.*

Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter Clifford and Mr. Rightly.

CLIFFORD.

YOUR knowledge in the profession, Mr. Rightly, is as questionless as your integrity; but there is something so surprizing in the discovery of the Charlton estate.

RIGHTLY. It is so strange, that I will not pronounce a positive opinion, till I have read again the collateral papers, and consider'd fully the descents in your family. Your grandfather, I think, was deceived in supposing he had a right to sell that part of the Charlton estate, which Alscrip proposes for his daughter's portion. The strength of this old settlement must have escaped my brother lawyer, or he was mad when he put it into my hands.

CLIFFORD. If you knew too how the value of the acquisition is enhanced, by the opportune moment in which it presents itself — I am in too much emotion to thank you as I ought.

RIGHTLY. Sir, I want neither compliment, nor acknowledgement, for revealing what I should be a party to dishonestly to conceal — but that duty done, wou'd it be an abuse of benevolence, unworthy as some of the parties may be, to preserve the peace of all concerned.

CLIFFORD. In what manner?

RIGHTLY. Sir Clement Flint will renounce the Alscrip alliance, at the first appearance of this defalcation, and if I am well informed, Lord Gayville will not lament the loss of his intended bride. The young lady is therefore free and still possessed of a great inheritance.

CLIFFORD. I do not yet perceive what you aim at.

RIGHTLY. She has the faults that wealth and a false education create, but they are not incurable. Marry her yourself. By sinking the claim in the union with his family, you command the father's approbation; and the daughter must be of a strange mould indeed, if the same obligation does not become a corrective of her pride, and an excitement to her gratitude. (*smiling*) I give some token of my friendship, when, as a lawyer, I propose you a wife instead of a suit in chancery.

CLIFFORD. I feel all the kindness of your suggestion; but if my claim is precarious, it is as repugnant to my delicacy as to my inclination, to realize it upon such terms; if it is substantial, I have such a disposition to make — you have a right to all my thoughts: but I have an appointment to obey, that admits no time for explanation; favour me for a moment with your pencil, (*Rightly takes out a pencil and pocket-book*) and a blank page in that memorandum book. [*Clifford writes.*]

RIGHTLY. My life on't, his head is turn'd upon some girl not worth a shilling — There is an amiable defect, but a very observable one in the nature of some men. A good head and heart

operate as effectually, as vice or folly could do, to make them improvident.

CLIFFORD. Mr. Rightly, I confide to your hands a new secret relative to the Charlton estate; do not read it till you return home. (*gives the book, aside and going.*) There, Gayville, is one reply to your challenge — and now for another.

RIGHTLY. One moment, Sir — I engage for no secrecy that my own judgment shall not warrant.

CLIFFORD. And the benevolence of your heart approve — Those are my conditions. —

[*Exeunt on opposite sides.*]

SCENE II. Hyde Park.

Enter Lord Gayville impetuously, looking at his watch.

Not here! I am sure I marked the hour as well as the place, precisely in my note. (*walks about*) Had I been told three days ago, that I should have been the appellant in a premeditated duel, I should have thought it an insult upon my principles — That Clifford should be the cause of my transgressing the legal and sacred duties, we have ever both maintained — oh, it would have seemed a visionary impossibility — But he comes, to cut reflections short —

Enter Clifford.

LORD GAYVILLE. I waited for you, Sir.

CLIFFORD. [*Bows in silence.*]

LORD GAYVILLE. That ceremonial would grace an encounter of punctilio, but applies ill to the terms upon which I have call'd you here.

CLIFFORD. What terms are those, my Lord?

LORD GAYVILLE. Vengeance! Ample, final vengeance! Draw, Sir.

CLIFFORD. No, my Lord; my sword is reserved for more becoming purposes: It is not the instrument of passion; and has yet been untried in a dispute with my friend.

LORD GAYVILLE. But why is it not ready for a different trial, the vindication of perfidy, the blackest species of perfidy, that ever the malignant enemy of mankind infused into the human breast — perfidy to the friend who loved and trusted you, and in the nearest interests of his heart.

CLIFFORD. Take care, my Lord; should my blood boil like your's, and it is rising fast, you know not the punishment that awaits you. I came temperate, your gross provocation and thirst of blood make temperance appear disgrace — I am tempted to take a revenge —

LORD GAYVILLE. (*draws*) The means are ready. Come, Sir, you are to give an example of qualities generally held incompatible — bravery and dishonour.

CLIFFORD. Another such word, and by heaven! — How have I deserv'd this opinion?

LORD GAYVILLE. Ask your conscience — Under the mask of friendship you have held a

secret intercourse with the woman I adore; you have supplanted me in her affections, you have robb'd me of the very charm of my life — can you deny it?

CLIFFORD. I avow it all.

LORD GAYVILLE. Unparalleled insolence of guilt!

CLIFFORD. Are you sure there is nothing within the scope of possibility, that wou'd excuse or atone —

LORD GAYVILLE. Death — Death only — no abject submission — no compromise for infamy — chuse instantly — and save yourself from the only stretch of baseness left — the invention of a falsehood to palliate —

CLIFFORD. (*In the utmost agitation, and drawing his sword*) Falsehood! — You shall have no other explanation. (*After a struggle within himself, Clifford drops the point and exposes his breast.*)

LORD GAYVILLE. Stand upon your defence, Sir — What do you mean?

CLIFFORD. You said nothing but my life wou'd satisfy you, take it, and remember me.

LORD GAYVILLE. I say so still — but upon an equal pledge — I am no assassin.

CLIFFORD. (*with great emotion*) If to strick at the heart of your friend, more deeply than that poor instrument in your hand could do, makes an assassin, you have been one already.

LORD GAYVILLE. That look, that tone, how like to innocence? Had he not avow'd such abominable practices. —

CLIFFORD. I avow them again: I have rival'd you in the love of the woman you adore—her affections are rivetted to me. I have removed her from your sight; secured her from your recovery —

LORD GAYVILLE. Damnation!

CLIFFORD. I have done it to save unguarded beauty; to save unprotected innocence; to save a Sister.

LORD GAYVILLE. A sister!

CLIFFORD. (*With exultation*) Vengeance! Ample, final vengeance! (*a pause*) It is accomplish'd — over him — and over myself — my victory is compleat.

LORD GAYVILLE. Where shall I hide my shame!

CLIFFORD. We'll share it, and forget it here.
[Embraces.]

LORD GAYVILLE. Why did you keep the secret from me?

CLIFFORD. I knew it not myself, till the strange concurrence of circumstances, to which you were in part witness a few hours since, brought it to light. I meant to impart to you the discovery, when my temper took fire — Let us bury our mutual errors in the thought, that we now for life are friends.

LORD GAYVILLE. Brothers, Clifford—Let us interchange that title and doubly, doubly ratify it. Unite me to your charming sister; accept the hand of Lady Emily in return—her heart I have discovered to be yours—We'll leave the world to the sordid and the tasteless; let an Alscip, or a Sir Clement Flint, wander after the phantom of happiness, we shall find her real retreat, and hold her by the bonds she covets, Virtue, Love and Friendship.

CLIFFORD. Not a word more, my lord, the bars against your proposal are insuperable.

LORD GAYVILLE. What bars?

CLIFFORD. Honour! propriety—and pride.

LORD GAYVILLE. Pride, Clifford?

CLIFFORD. Yes, my Lord; Harriet Clifford, shall not *steal* the hand of a prince; nor will I—tho' doating on Lady Emily with a passion like your own, bear the idea of a clandestine union in a family, to whom I am bound by obligation and trust. Indeed, my lord, without Sir Clement's consent, you must think no more of my sister.

LORD GAYVILLE. Stern Stoic, but I *will*, and *not* clandestinely; I'll instantly to Sir Clement.

CLIFFORD. Do not be rash. Fortune, or some better agent, is working in wonders—Meet me presently at your Uncle's, in the mean while promise not to stir in this business.

LORD GAYVILLE. What hope from delay?

CLIFFORD. Promise—

LORD GAYVILLE. I am in a state to catch at shadows — I'll try to obey you.

CLIFFORD. Farewel! —

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Sir Clement's house.*

Enter Miss Alscrip in great spirits, followed by Mrs. Blandish.

MISS ALSCRIP. I am delighted at this summons from Sir Clement, Blandish; poor old clear-sight, I hope he has projected a reconciliation.

MRS. BLANDISH. How I rejoice to see those smiles returned to the face that was made for them!

MISS ALSCRIP. Return'd, Blandish? I desire you will not insinuate it ever was without them — Why sure, you would not have the world imagine the temper of an Heirefs of my class, was to be ruffled by the loss of a paltry earl — I have been highly diverted with what has passed from beginning to end.

MRS. BLANDISH. Well, if good humour can be a fault, sure the excess you carry it to must be the example.

MISS ALSCRIP. I desire it may be made known in all companies, that I have done nothing but laugh — nay, it is true too.

MRS. BLANDISH. My dear creature, of what consequence is the truth, when you are charging me with the execution of your desires.

MISS ALSCRIP. Could any thing be more diverting than my Lord's Intriguing with my

chamber-maid before marriage, that must be your cue.

MRS. BLANDISH. Excellent!

MISS ALSCRIP. The design was in rule, and founded upon the best precedents — only the time, in the news-paper phrase, was premature, he! he! he!

MRS. BLANDISH. He! he! he!

MISS ALSCRIP. And then the airs of the moppet — Could any thing be more ridiculous?

MRS. BLANDISH. The rivalry you mean — Rival, Miss Alscrip. — He! he! he!

[*Half laugh.*]

MISS ALSCRIP. Yes, but when you take this tone in public, laugh a little louder.

MRS. BLANDISH. Rival, Miss Alscrip, ha! ha! ha!

BOTH. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

MRS. BLANDISH. (*wiping her eyes as not quite recovered from her laugh*) For mirth's sake, what is become of the rival? — Who will you chuse she shall have run away with?

MISS ALSCRIP. Leave it in doubt as it is; fixing circumstances confines the curiosity to one story which may be disproved; uncertainty leaves it open to an hundred, and makes them all probable. But I hear some of the company upon the stairs: Now, Blandish — You shall be witness to the temper and dignity, with which a woman of my consequence can discard a quality courtship that offends her — Having sufficiently mortified

the Uncle and Nephew, with a triumphant rail-
lery all my own, I shall request Lady Emily to
set the Paphian mimp upon the family disappoint-
ment, and leave them together to the exercise of
the patience that usually attends the loss of a hun-
dred thousand pounds.

MRS. BLANDISH. Sweet temper'd soul!

Enter Sir Clement Flint.

SIR CLEMENT. Miss Alscip, your —

[As he's beginning to say your humble servant]

Enter Blandish out of breath.

BLANDISH. The duel's over, and the com-
batants in whole skins — Never ran so fast since
I was born —

SIR CLEMENT. — To be too late by some
minutes in your intelligence. I know you feel
the disappointment from the sincere affection you
bear all parties.

MISS ALSCRIP. Duel! — Pray let us hear
the particulars — As there is no mischief I shall
not faint. *[Ironically.]*

SIR CLEMENT. I guess it has been of the
common place kind. — Hats over the brows —
glum silence — thrust — parry — and riposte —
Explain, and shake hands: Your man of honour
never sets his friend right, till he has exchange'd
a shot — or a thrust: Oh, a little essence of steel
or gunpowder, is a morning whet to the temper:
It carries off all qualms, and leaves the digestion
free for any thing that is presented to it.

MISS ALSCRIP. Dear, how fortunate! Considering the pills some folks have to swallow.

SIR CLEMENT. Blandish, see if the door of Clifford's room is yet unlocked, there is a person within you little expect to find, and whom it may be proper for this lady, and me to interrogate together. — I don't know what to call her — Inexplicability in petticoats. (*The door opens*) and

Enter Lady Emily.

BLANDISH. Lady Emily!

SIR CLEMENT. Inexplicable, with a vengeance.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*aside*) Lady Emily, shut up in Clifford's apartment! Beyond my expectation, indeed.

[*With a malicious air.*

[*Lady Emily seems pleased.*]

SIR CLEMENT. (*dryly*) Lady Emily, I know you were always cautious whom you visited, and never gave a better proof of your discernment.

LADY EMILY. Never. Oh! my poor dear uncle, you little think what is going to befall you.

SIR CLEMENT. Not a disappointment in love, I hope.

LADY EMILY. No, but in something much nearer your heart — your system is threaten'd with a blow, that I think, and from my soul I hope, it never will recover: would you guess that the sagacious observations of your whole life are upon the point of being confounded by the production —

SIR CLEMENT. Of what?

LADY EMILY. A woman of ingenuous discretion, and a man of unaffected integrity.

SIR CLEMENT. Hah!

MRS. BLANDISH. What can she mean?

MISS ALSCRIP. Nothing good — she looks so pleasant.

LADY EMILY. Come forth, my injur'd friend. Our personal acquaintance has been short, but our hearts were intimate from the first sight (*presenting her*) Your prisoner, Sir, is Miss Harriet Clifford.

SIR CLEMENT. Clifford's sister!

MISS ALSCRIP. What, the run away Alton, turned into a sprig of quality.

LADY EMILY. (*disdainfully to Miss Alscrip*) The humble dependant of Alscrip house — The wanton — the paragon of fraud — the only female that can equal Clifford (*tauntingly to Sir Clement*) She is indeed! (*with emphasis and affection*)

BLANDISH. (*aside*) Oh, rot the source of the family fondness — I see I have no card left in my favour — but the Heirefs. (*Goes to her and pays court*) (*During this conversation, aside, Lady Emily seems encouraging Miss Clifford — Sir Clement musing, and by turns examining her.*)

SIR CLEMENT. (*to himself*) „Ingenuous discretion!“

Enter Clifford (and runs to his sister).

CLIFFORD. My dearest Harriet! the joy I purposed in presenting you here, is anticipated;

but, my blameless fugitive! relate the tale of your distresses, and my pride in you will not be a wonder.

MISS CLIFFORD. They have been short — and are overpaid by your indulgence. Insulted by the family I liv'd with; made more wretched by a detested pursuit which my Uncle's violence enforc'd, and confident of your being returned, I fled to London for an asylum.

SIR CLEMENT. Which has been admirably chosen in my house.

CLIFFORD. Sir; I really think so. Lady Emily's generosity, your justice, and my sister's honour make it sacred. (*while Clifford is speaking*)

Enter Lord Gayville. (starts at seeing Miss Clifford.)

SIR CLEMENT. (*perceiving Lord Gayville*) And peculiarly secure against the visits of *this detested pursuer*.

LORD GAYVILLE. (*with rapture*) Her persecutor and her convert. Her virtues which no humility could conceal, and every trial made more resplendant, discover'd, disgraced, and reclaimed a libertine.

MISS CLIFFORD. How am I distress'd — what ought I to answer?

LORD GAYVILLE. Impressed sentiment upon desire, gave honour to passion, and drew from my soul a vow, which heaven chastise me when I violate, to obtain her by a legal, sacred claim, or renounce fortune, family and friends, and become a self-devoted outcast of the world.

MISS CLIFFORD. Oh! brother, interpose.

SIR CLEMENT. My Lord, your fortune, family and friends are much oblig'd to you. Your part is perfect — Mr. Clifford you are call'd upon. Miss, in strict propriety, throws the business upon her relations — Come, finish the comedy; join one of her hands to the gallant's, while, with the other, she covers her blushes — and he in rapture delivers the moral: All for Love, or, the World well lost. (*Miss Clifford still appears agitated.*)

CLIFFORD. Be patient, my Harriet, this is the school for prejudice, and the lesson of its shame is near.

MISS ALSCRIP. I vow these singular circumstances give me quite a confusion of pleasure. The astonishing good fortune of my late Protégée in finding so impassion'd a friendship in her brother's bed-chamber; the captivating eloquence of Lord Gayville in winding up an eclairecissement which I admire — not for the first time — to day — and the superlative joy, Sir Clement must feel at an union, founded upon the purity of the passions, are subjects of such different congratulation, that I hardly know where to begin.

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) Charming! her insolence will justify what so seldom occurs to one — a severe retort without a possible sense of compunction.

MISS ALSCRIP. But in point of fortune — don't imagine, Sir Clement, I wou'd insinuate that the Lady is destitute — oh Lord, far from it. Her musical talents are a portion — I can't say I

have yet seen a countess open a concert for her own benefit; but there can be no reason why a woman of the first quality should not be Directress of the Opera — Indeed, after all that has happen'd, it is the best chance I see for a good administration there.

Alscrip and Rightly (without.)

ALSCRIP. Why, stop a moment — Mr. Rightly: 'Death after chasing you all over the town, don't be so impatient the instant I overtake you.

SIR CLEMENT. What have we here — the lawyers in dispute?

ALSCRIP. *(entering)* You have not heard my last word yet.

RIGHTLY. *(entering)* You have heard mine, Sir.

ALSCRIP. *(whispering)* I'll make the five thousand I offered, ten.

RIGHTLY. Millions wou'd not bribe me — *(coming forward.)* When I detect wrong, and vindicate the sufferer, I feel the spirit of the Law of England, and the pride of a practitioner.

ALSCRIP. Lucifer confound such practices. *(In this part of the scene, Sir Clement, Lord Gayville, Lady Emily, Clifford, and Miss Clifford, form one groupe.)*

(Rightly opens a deed, and points out a part of it to Sir Clement.)

(Mr. and Miss Alscrip carry on the following speeches on the side at which Alscrip has enter'd. And Mr. and Mrs. Blandish are farther back, observing.)

ALSCRIP. That cursed! cursed flaw. —

MISS ALSCRIP. Flaw! who has dared to talk of one? not in my reputation, Sir?

ALSCRIP. No, but in my estate; which is a damn'd deal worse.

MISS ALSCRIP. How! what? when! — where? — The estate that was to be settled upon me?

ALSCRIP. Yes, but that *me* turn'd topsy turvey — when *me* broke into my room this morning, and the devil followed to fly away with all my faculties at once — I am ruin'd — Let us see what you will settle upon your poor father.

MISS ALSCRIP. I settle upon *you*?

MRS. BLANDISH. This is an embarrassing accident.

MISS ALSCRIP. Yes, and a pretty help you are, with a drop chin like a frontispiece to the lamentations.

RIGHTLY. (*coming forward with Sir Clement*) I stated this with some doubt this morning, but now my credit as a lawyer upon the issue. — The Heirefs falls short of the terms in your treaty by two thousand pounds a year — which this deed, lately and providentially discover'd, entails upon the heirs of Sir William Charlton, and consequently, in right of his mother, upon this gentleman.

LADY EMILY. How!

LORD GAYVILLE. Happy disappointment.

SIR CLEMENT. (*aside*) Two thousand a year to Clifford! It's a pity for the parade of disinter-

estedness, that he open'd his designs upon Emily, before he knew his pretensions.

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) Now, if there were twenty ceilings, and as many floors, could not I find a spot to settle my silly looks upon.

(*Sir Clement observes her with his usual shyness.*)

(*Then turning towards Alscip*) Palm a false tittle upon *me*? I shou'd have thought the attempt beyond the collective assurance of Westminster-hall — and he takes the loss as much to heart as if he bought the estate with his own money,

ALSCRIP. (*with hesitation*) Sir Clement — what think you — of an amicable adjustment of all these businesses?

SIR CLEMENT. (*ironically*) Nothing can be more reasonable. The value of Miss Alscip's amiable disposition, placed against the abatement of her fortune, is a matter of the most easy computation; and to decide the portion, Mr. Clifford ought to relinquish of his acquisition — Lady Emily — will you be a referée?

LADY EMILY. (*aside*) Yes, the Lynx has me — I thought I should not escape — (*to him*) No, Sir; my poor abilities only extend to an amicable endeavour here. (*to Miss Alscip*) And really, Miss Alscip, I see no reason for your being dispirited, there may be many ready-made titles at market, within the reach of your purse. Or, why should not a woman of your consequence originate her own splendour? there's an old admirer of mine — He wou'd make a very pretty lord — and indeed, wou'd contribute something on his own part to

ease the purchase — The Blandish family is well with all administrations, and a new coronet is always as big again as an old one. I don't see how you cou'd lay out part of your independency to more advantage.

BLANDISH. (*aside*) Yes, but since flaws are in fashion, I shall look a little into things before I agree to the bargain.

LADY EMILY. And if you replace this part of your family, (*pointing to Miss Clifford*) by making an humble companion of your old gentleman, I protest, I do not see any great alteration in your affairs.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*aside*) I'll die before I'll discover my vexation — and yet, (*half crying*) no title — no place.

LADY EMILY. Depend upon it, Miss Alscrip, your place will be found exactly where it ought to be. The public eye in this country is never long deceived — Believe me — and cherish obscurity — Title may bring forward merits, but it also places our defects in horrid relief.

MISS CLIFFORD. You seem to expect something from me, Miss Alscrip — Be in no pain for any thing that has pass'd between us — My pity has entirely overpower'd my resentment.

ALSCRIP. Molly, the sooner we get out of court the better — we have damnably the worst of this cause, so come along Molly (*taking her under the arm*) — and farewell to Berkley-square. Whoever wants Alscrip house, will find it in the neighbourhood of Furnival's-Inn, with the noble title of Scrivener, in capitals — Blank bonds at the

windows, and a brass knocker at the door (*pulling her*) Come along Molly.

MISS ALSCRIP. (*half crying*) (*aside*) Oh! the barbarous metamorphosis — but his *flusterums* for a week, will serve my temper, as a regimen. I will then take the management of my affairs into my own hands, and break from my cloud anew: and you shall find (*to the company*) there are those without a coronet, that can be as faucy, and as loud, and stop the way in all public places as well as the best of you. (*Lady Emily laughs*) Yes, Madam, and without borrowing your Ladyship's airs.

ALSCRIP. (*pulling her*) Come along, Molly.

MISS ALSCRIP. Oh you have been a jewel of a father. (*The company laugh.*)

[*Exeunt Mr. and Miss Alscrip.*]

Mr. and Mrs. Blandish stay behind.

BLANDISH. (*aside*) What a cursed turn things have taken! My schemes evaporate like inflammable air, and down drops poor adventurer.

LADY EMILY. Mrs. Blandish, sure you do not leave your friend, Miss Alscrip, in distress?

MRS. BLANDISH. We'll not disturb the ashes of the dead — my sweet Lady Emily —

BLANDISH. None of your flourishes, my dear sister — In the present moment, even mine would not do. Sentiment and sincerity have the ascendancy. But give them a little time; all parties will come round. (*addressing the company*) Flattery is the diet of good humour; not one of you can live without it; and when you quarrel with the family of Blandish, you leave refined cookery to be fed upon scraps, by a poor cousin or a led captain. (*taking his sister under his arm.*)

MRS. BLANDISH. (*with a look of courtship to the company.*) Oh! the two charming pair!

BLANDISH. (*pulling her away*) Oh! thou walking dedication! [Exeunt.]

LORD GAYVILLE. Precious groupe, fare ye well (*to Sir Clement*) And now, Sir, whatever may be your determinations towards me — here are pretensions you may patronize without breach of discretion. The estate which devolves to my friend —

RIGHTLY. To prevent errors, is not his to bestow.

SIR CLEMENT. What now — more flaws?

RIGHTLY. The estate was his beyond the reach of controversy: but before he was truly sure of it, on his way to Hyde-Park did this spendthrift, by a stroke of his pen, divest himself of every shilling — Here is the covenant by which he binds himself to execute proper conveyances as soon as the necessary forms can be gone through.

LORD GAYVILLE. And in favour of whom is this desperate act?

RIGHTLY. Of a most dangerous seducer — a little mercenary, that when she gets hold of the heart, does not leave an atom of it our own.

ALL. How!

RIGHTLY. (*with feeling*) And there she stands; (*pointing to Miss Clifford*) with a look and an emotion that wou'd condemn her before any court in the universe.

LADY EMILY. Glorious — matchless CLIFFORD!

MISS CLIFFORD. Brother, this must not be.

CLIFFORD. Your pardon, my dear Harriet, it is done. Sir Clement, my sister's fortune is still far short of what you expected with Miss Alscip; for that deficiency, I have only to offer the virtues, Lord Gayville has proved, and the affection she found it easier to controul than to conceal. If you will receive her, thus circumstanced, into your family, mine has been an acquisition indeed.

LADY EMILY. (*coming up to Sir Clement*) Now, Sir, where's the suspicion! Where is now the ruling principle that governs mankind! Thro' what perspective, by what trial, will you find self-interest here? What, not one pithy word to mock my credulity! — Alas! poor Yorick — quite chop-fallen. — Forgive me, Sir, I own I am agitated to extravagance — You thought me disconcerted at the first discovery, I am delighted at the last; there's a problem in my disposition worthy your solving.

SIR CLEMENT. [*Who has been profoundly thoughtfull*] Mr. Rightly, favour me with that paper in your hand.

RIGHTLY. Mr. Clifford's engagement, Sir. (*Gives the paper, Sir Clement looks it over and tears it.*) What do you mean, Sir?

SIR CLEMENT. To cancel the obligation, and pay the equivalent to Gayville; or if Clifford will have his own way and become a beggar by renewing it, to make an heiress of my own for his reparation — and there *she* stands [*pointing to Lady Emily*] With sensibility and vivacity so uncommonly blended, that they extract benevolence where ever it exists, and create it where it never

was before — Your point is carried — You may both fall upon your knees, for the consent of ladies.

LORD GAYVILLE. [*to Miss Clifford*] In this happy moment, let my errors be forgot, and my love alone remember'd.

MISS CLIFFORD. With these sanctions for my avowal — I will not deny that I saw and felt the sincerity of your attachment, from the time it was capable of being restrained by respect.

CLIFFORD. Words are wanting, Lady Emily —

LADY EMILY. I wish they may with all my heart, but it is generally remarked that wanting words, is the beginning of a florid set speech — To be serious, Clifford — We want but little explanation on either side — Sir Clement, will tell you how long we have conversed by our actions. [*Gives her hand*] My dear Uncle, how a simile becomes you in its natural meaning!

SIR CLEMENT. If you think me a convert, you are mistaken: I have ever believ'd *self* to be the predominant principle of the human mind — My heart at this instant confirms the doctrine — There's my problem for yours, my dear Emily, and may all who hear me agree in this solution — to reward the deserving, and make those we love happy, is self-interest in the extreme.

F I N I S.

Burgoyne, John

The heiress A comedy in five acts

Berlin 1790

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